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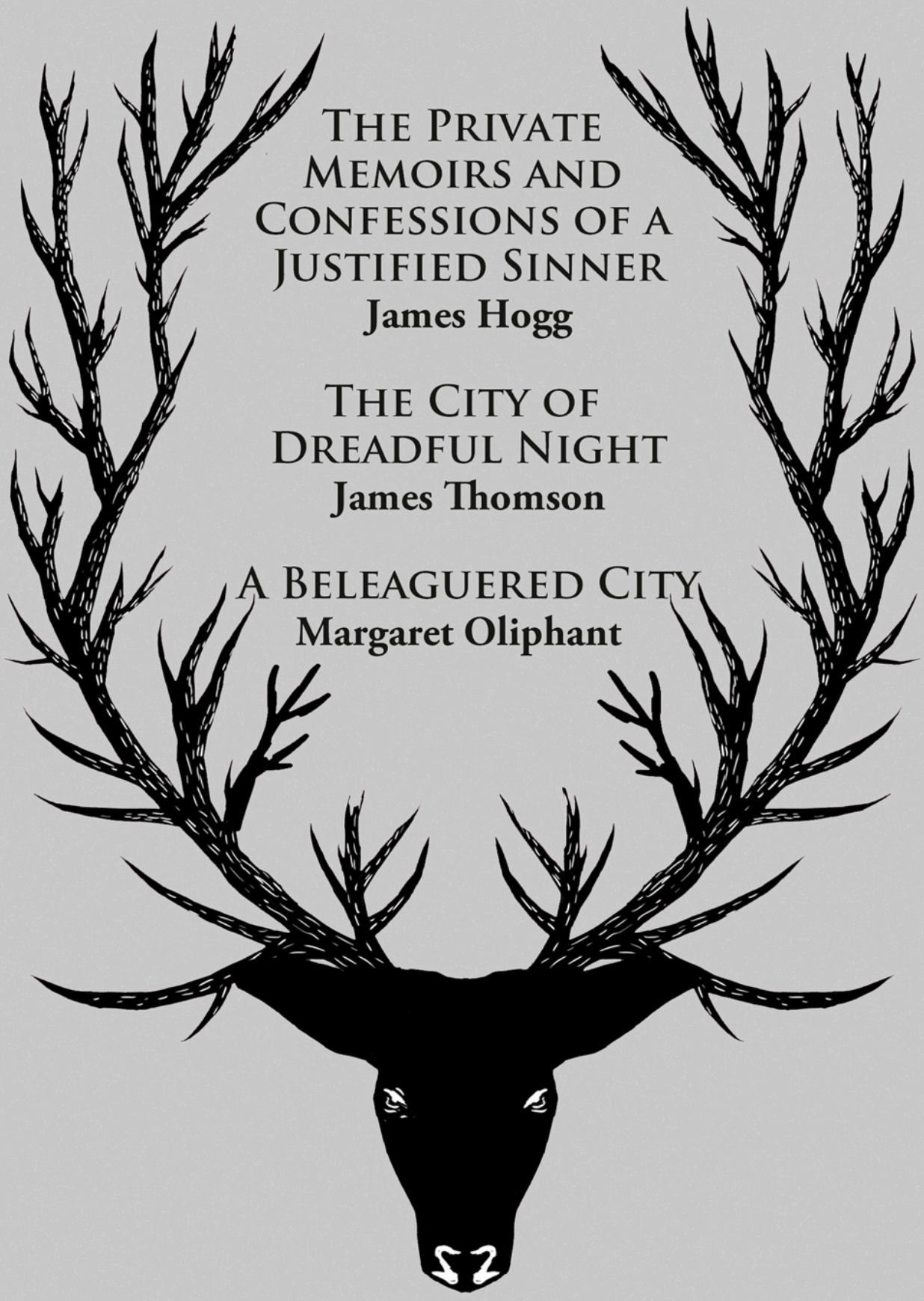

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

James Hogg

The City of Dreadful Night

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A Beleaguered City

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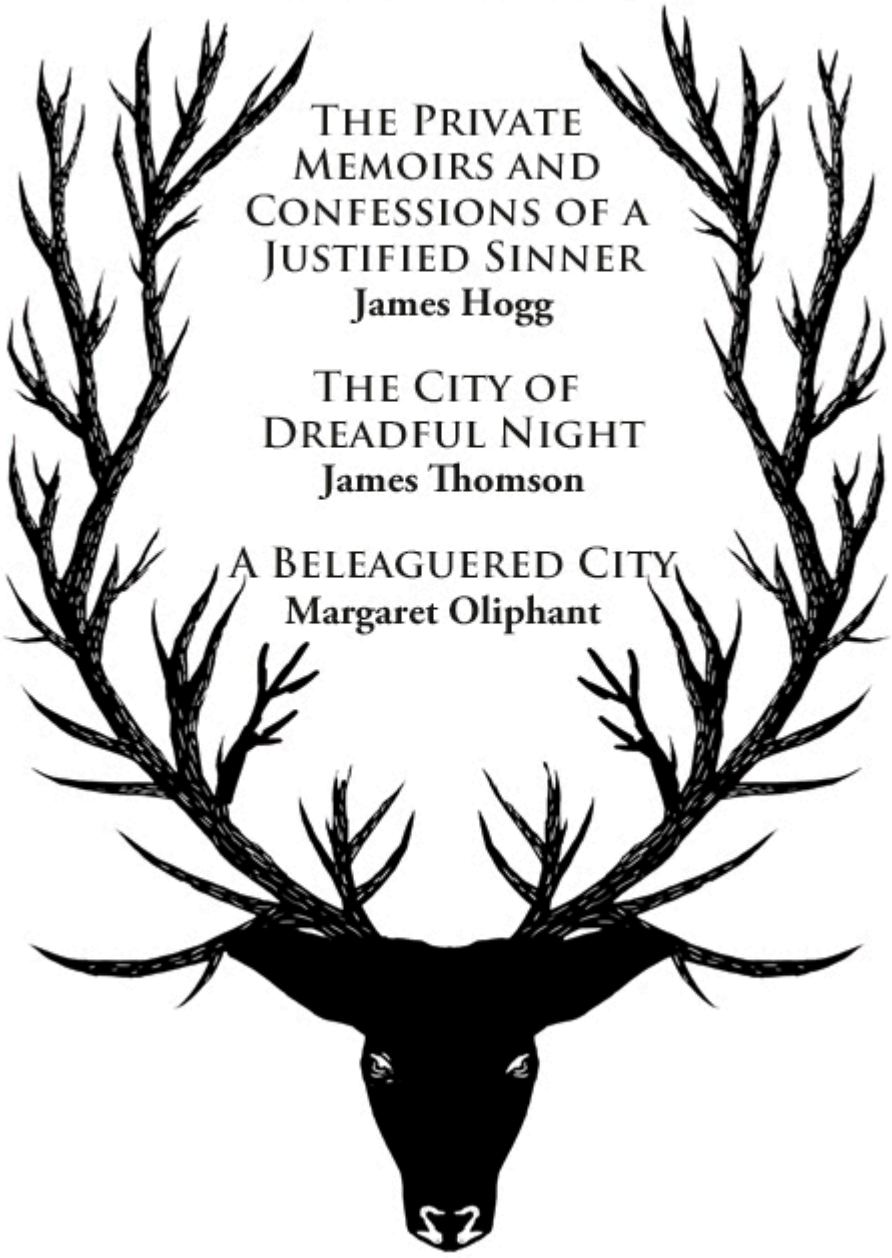

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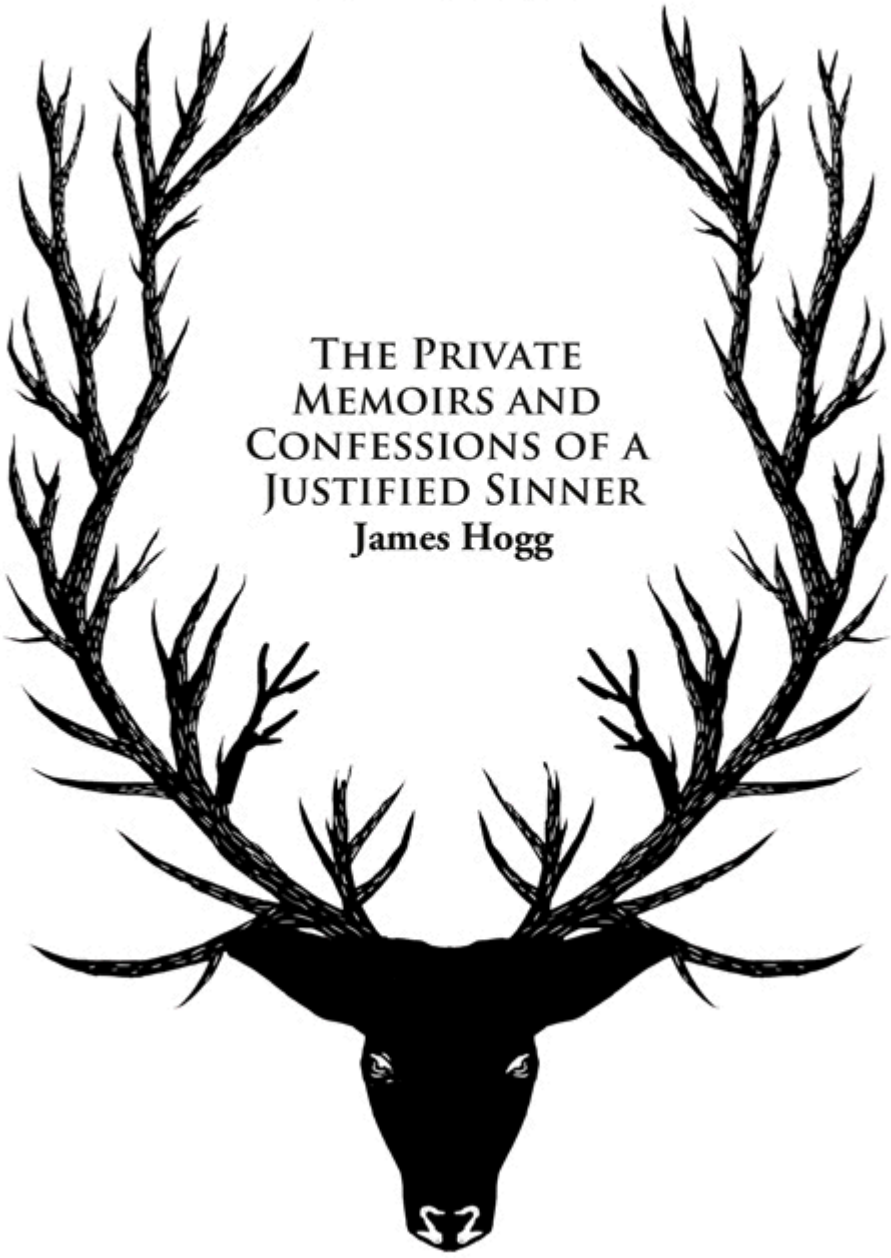

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

James Hogg

‘My life has been a life of trouble and turmoil; of change and vicissitude; of anger and exultation; of sorrow and of vengeance.’

About the Author

James Hogg (1770–1835) is best known for the novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. His family were farmers, but became labourers on a neighbour's farm after his father was declared bankrupt. Hogg worked for a time as a shepherd's assistant and later a shepherd, teaching himself to read from the newspapers and other works passed to him by the wife of his employer. In 1790 he began working for James Laidlaw, who helped Hogg further his education by allowing him access to his library. He started writing songs and plays. He began to be recruited for various anthologies including Walter Scott's *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and in 1810 moved to Edinburgh to pursue a full time writing career. Hogg was a prolific writer throughout his life, producing novels, poetry and songs up until his death in 1835.

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TO
THE HON. WILLIAM SMITH
LORD PROVOST OF GLASGOW
&e. &e. &e.
This work is respectfully inscribed,
as a small mark of
THE EDITOR'S
esteem for him as a man,
and respect for him as
a magistrate.

The Editor's Narrative

It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago, and for at least a century previous to that period. That family was supposed to have been a branch of the ancient family of Colquhoun, and it is certain that from it spring the Cowans that spread towards the Border. I find, that in the year 1687, George Colwan succeeded his uncle of the same name, in the lands of Dalchastel and Balgrennan; and this being all I can gather of the family from history, to tradition I must appeal for the remainder of the motley adventures of that house. But of the matter furnished by the latter of these powerful monitors, I have no reason to complain: It has been handed down to the world in unlimited abundance; and I am certain, that in recording the hideous events which follow, I am only relating to the greater part of the inhabitants of at least four counties of Scotland, matters of which they were before perfectly well informed.

This George was a rich man, or supposed to be so, and was married, when considerably advanced in life, to the sole heiress and reputed daughter of a Baillie Orde, of Glasgow. This proved a conjunction any thing but agreeable to the parties contracting. It is well known, that the Reformation principles had long before that time taken a powerful hold of the hearts and affections of the people of Scotland, although the feeling was by no means general, or in equal degrees; and it so happened that this married couple felt completely at variance on the subject. Granting it to have been so, one would have thought that the laird, owing to his retired situation, would have been the one that inclined to the stern doctrines of the reformers; and that the young and gay dame from the city would have adhered to the free principles cherished by the court party, and indulged in rather to extremity, in opposition to their severe and carping contemporaries.

The contrary, however, happened to be the case. The laird was what his country neighbours called 'a droll, careless chap,' with a very limited proportion of the fear of God in his heart, and very nearly as little of the fear of man. The laird had not intentionally wronged or offended either of the parties, and perceived not the necessity of deprecating their vengeance. He had hitherto believed that he was living in most cordial terms with the greater part of the inhabitants of the earth, and with the powers above in particular: but woe be unto him if he was not soon convinced of the fallacy of such damning security! For his lady was the most severe and gloomy of all bigots to the principles of the Reformation. Hers were not the tenets of the great reformers, but theirs mightily overstrained and deformed. Theirs was an unguent hard to be swallowed; but hers was that unguent embittered and overheated until nature could not longer bear it. She had imbibed her ideas from the doctrines of one flaming predestinarian divine alone; and these were so rigid, that they became a stumbling-block to many of his brethren, and a mighty handle for the enemies of his party to turn the machine of the state against them.

The wedding festivities at Dalcastle partook of all the gaiety, not of that stern age, but of one previous to it. There was feasting, dancing, piping, and singing: the liquors were handed around in great fulness, the ale in large wooden bickers, and the brandy in capacious horns of oxen. The laird gave full scope to his homely glee. He danced, – he snapped his fingers to the music, – clapped his hands and shouted at the turn of the tune. He saluted every girl in the hall whose appearance was any thing tolerable, and requested of their sweethearts to take the same freedom with his bride, by way of retaliation. But there she sat at the head of the hall in still and blooming beauty, absolutely refusing to tread a single measure with any gentleman there. The only enjoyment in which she appeared to partake, was in now and then stealing a word of sweet conversation with her favourite pastor about divine things; for he had accompanied her home after marrying her to her husband, to see her fairly settled in her new dwelling. He addressed her several times by her new name, Mrs Colwan; but she turned away her head disgusted, and looked with pity and contempt towards the old inadvertent sinner, capering away in the height of his unregenerated mirth. The minister perceived the workings of her pious mind, and thenceforward addressed her by the courteous title of Lady Dalcastle, which sounded somewhat better, as not coupling her name with one of the wicked: and there is too great reason to believe, that for all the solemn vows she had come under, and these were of no ordinary binding, particularly on the laird's part, she at that time despised, if not abhorred him, in her heart.

The good parson again blessed her, and went away. She took leave of him with tears in her eyes, entreating him often to visit her in that heathen land of the Amorite, the Hittite, and the Girgashite: to which he assented, on many solemn and qualifying conditions, – and then the comely bride retired to her chamber to pray.

It was customary, in those days, for the bride's-man and maiden, and a few select friends, to visit the new married couple after they had retired to rest, and drink a cup to their healths, their happiness, and a numerous posterity. But the laird delighted not in this: he wished to have his jewel to himself; and, slipping away quietly from his jovial party, he retired to his chamber to his beloved, and bolted the door. He found her engaged with the writings of the Evangelists, and terribly demure. The laird went up to caress her; but she turned away her head, and spoke of the follies of aged men, and something of the broad way that leadeth to destruction. The laird did not thoroughly comprehend this allusion; but being considerably flustered by drinking, and disposed to take all in good part, he only remarked, as he took off his shoes and stockings, 'that whether the way was broad or narrow, it was time that they were in their bed.'

'Sure, Mr Colwan, you won't go to bed to-night, at such an important period of your life, without first saying prayers for yourself and me.'

When she said this, the laird had his head down almost to the ground, loosing his shoe-buckle; but when he heard of *prayers*, on such a night, he raised his face suddenly up, which was all over as flushed and red as a rose, and answered,—

'Prayers, Mistress! Lord help your crazed head, is this a night for prayers?'

He had better have held his peace. There was such a torrent of profound divinity poured out upon him, that the laird became ashamed, both of himself and his new-made spouse, and wist not what to say: but the brandy helped him out.

'It strikes me, my dear, that religious devotion would be somewhat out of place to-night,' said he. 'Allowing that it is ever so beautiful, and ever so beneficial, were we to ride on the rigging of it at all times, would we not be constantly making a farce of it: It would be like reading the Bible and the jest-book, verse about, and would render the life of man a medley of absurdity and confusion.'

But against the cant of the bigot or the hypocrite, no reasoning can aught avail. If you would argue until the end of life, the infallible creature must alone be right. So it proved with the laird. One Scripture text followed another, not in the least connected, and one sentence of the profound Mr Wringhim's sermons after another, proving the duty of family worship, till the laird lost patience, and, tossing himself into bed, said, carelessly, that he would leave that duty upon her shoulders for one night.

The meek mind of Lady Dalcastle was somewhat disarranged by this sudden evolution. She felt that she was left rather in an awkward situation. However, to show her unconscionable spouse that she was resolved to hold fast her integrity, she kneeled down and prayed in terms so potent, that she deemed she was sure of making an impression on him. She did so; for in a short time the laird began to utter a response so fervent, that she was utterly astounded, and fairly driven from the chain of her orisons. He began, in truth, to sound a nasal bugle of no ordinary calibre, – the notes being little inferior to those of a military trumpet. The lady tried to proceed, but every returning note from the bed burst on her ear with a louder twang, and a longer peal, till the concord of sweet sounds became so truly pathetic, that the meek spirit of the dame was quite overcome; and after shedding a flood of tears, she arose from her knees, and retired to the chimney-corner with her Bible in her lap, there to spend the hours in holy meditation till such time as the inebriated trumpeter should awaken to a sense of propriety.

The laird did not awake in any reasonable time; for, he being overcome with fatigue and wassail, his sleep became sounder, and his Morphean measures more intense. These varied a little in their structure; but the general run of the bars sounded something in this way, – 'Hic-hoc-wheew!' It was most profoundly ludicrous; and could not have missed exciting risibility in any one, save a pious, a disappointed, and humbled bride.

The good dame wept bitterly. She could not for her life go and awaken the monster, and request him to make room for her: but she retired somewhere; for the laird, on awaking next morning, found that he was still lying alone. His sleep had been of the deepest and most genuine sort; and all the time that it lasted, he had never once thought of either wives, children, or sweethearts, save in the way of dreaming about them; but as his spirit began again by slow degrees to verge towards the boundaries of reason, it became lighter and more buoyant from the effects of deep repose, and his dreams partook of that buoyancy, yea, to a degree hardly expressible. He dreamed of the reel, the jig, the strathspey, and the corant; and the elasticity of his frame was such, that he was bounding over the heads of the maidens, and making his feet skimmer against the ceiling, enjoying, the while, the most extatic emotions. These grew too fervent for the shackles of the drowsy god to restrain. The nasal bugle ceased its prolonged sounds in one moment,

and a sort of hectic laugh took its place. ‘Keep it going, – play up, you devils!’ cried the laird, without changing his position on the pillow. But this exertion to hold the fiddlers at their work, fairly awakened the delighted dreamer; and though he could not refrain from continuing his laugh, he at length, by tracing out a regular chain of facts, came to be sensible of his real situation. ‘Rabina, where are you? What’s become of you, my dear?’ cried the laird. But there was no voice, nor any one that answered or regarded. He flung open the curtains, thinking to find her still on her knees, as he had seen her; but she was not there, either sleeping or waking. ‘Rabina! Mrs Colwan!’ shouted he, as loud as he could call, and then added, in the same breath, ‘God save the king, – I have lost my wife!’

He sprung up and opened the casement: the day-light was beginning to streak the east, for it was spring, and the nights were short, and the mornings very long. The laird half dressed himself in an instant, and strode through every room in the house, opening the windows as he went, and scrutinizing every bed and every corner. He came into the hall where the wedding festival had held and, as he opened the various window-boards, loving couples flew off like hares surprised too late in the morning among the early braird. ‘Hoo-boo! Fie, be frightened!’ cried the laird. ‘Fie, rin like fools, as if ye were caught in an ill turn!’ – His bride was not among them; so he was obliged to betake himself to farther search. ‘She will be praying in some corner, poor woman,’ said he to himself. ‘It is an unlucky thing this praying. But, for my part, I fear I have behaved very ill; and I must endeavour to make amends.’

The laird continued his search, and at length found his beloved in the same bed with her Glasgow cousin, who had acted as bride’s-maid. ‘You sly and malevolent imp,’ said the laird; ‘you have played me such a trick when I was fast asleep! I have not known a frolic so clever, and, at the same time, so severe. Come along, you baggage you!’

‘Sir, I will let you know, that I detest your principles and your person alike,’ said she. ‘It shall never be said, Sir, that my person was at the controul of a heathenish man of Belial, – a dangler among the daughters of women, – a promiscuous dancer, – and a player at unlawful games. Forego your rudeness, Sir, I say, and depart away from my presence and that of my kinswoman.’

‘Come along, I say, my charming Rab. If you were the pink of all puritans, and the saint of all saints, you are my wife, and must do as I command you.’

‘Sir, I will sooner lay down my life than be subjected to your godless will; therefore, I say, desist, and begone with you.’

But the laird regarded none of these testy sayings: he rolled her in a blanket, and bore her triumphantly away to his chamber, taking care to keep a fold or two of the blanket always rather near to her mouth, in case of any outrageous forthcoming of noise.

The next day at breakfast the bride was long in making her appearance. Her maid asked to see her; but George did not choose that any body should see her but himself: he paid her several visits, and always turned the key as he came out. At length breakfast was served; and during the time of refreshment the laird tried to break several jokes; but it was remarked, that they wanted their accustomed brilliancy, and that his nose was particularly red at the top.

Matters, without all doubt, had been very bad between the new-married couple; for in the course of the day the lady deserted her quarters, and returned to her father’s house in Glasgow, after having been a night on the road; stage-coaches and steam-boats having then no existence in that quarter. Though Baillie Orde had acquiesced in his wife’s asseveration regarding the likeness of their only daughter to her father, he never loved or admired her greatly; therefore this behaviour nothing astounded him. He questioned her strictly as to the grievous offence committed against her; and could discover nothing that warranted a procedure so fraught with disagreeable consequences. So, after mature deliberation, the baillie addressed her as follows:

‘Ay, ay, Raby! An’ sae I find that Dalcastle has actually refused to say prayers with you when you ordered him; an’ has guidit you in a rude indelicate manner, outstepping the respect due to my daughter, – as my daughter. But wi’ regard to what is due to his own wife, of that he’s a better judge nor me. However, since he has behaved in that manner to *my daughter*, I shall be revenged on him for aince; for I shall return the obligation to ane nearer to him: that is, I shall take pennyworths of his wife, – an’ let him lick at that.’

‘What do you mean, Sir?’ said the astonished damsel.

‘I mean to be revenged on that villain Dalcastle,’ said he, ‘for what he has done to my daughter. Come hither, Mrs Colwan, you shall pay for this.’

So saying, the baillie began to inflict corporal punishment on the runaway wife. His strokes were not indeed very deadly, but he made a mighty flourish in the infliction, pretending to be in a great rage only at the Laird of Dalcastle. ‘Villain that he is!’ exclaimed he, ‘I shall teach him to behave in such a manner to a child of mine, be she as she may: since I cannot get at himself, I shall lounder her that is nearest to

him in life. Take you that, and that, Mrs Colwan, for your husband's impertinence!'

The poor afflicted woman wept and prayed, but the baillie would not abate aught of his severity. After fuming, and beating her with many stripes, far drawn, and lightly laid down, he took her up to her chamber, five stories high, locked her in, and there he fed her on bread and water, all to be revenged on the presumptuous Laird of Dalcastle; but ever and anon, as the baillie came down the stair from carrying his daughter's meal, he said to himself, 'I shall make the sight of the laird the blithest she ever saw in her life.'

Lady Dalcastle got plenty of time to read, and pray, and meditate; but she was at a great loss for one to dispute with about religious tenets; for she found, that without this advantage, about which there was a perfect rage at that time, her reading, and learning of Scripture texts, and sentences of intricate doctrine, availed her nought; so she was often driven to sit at her casement and look out for the approach of the heathenish Laird of Dalcastle.

That hero, after a considerable lapse of time, at length made his appearance. Matters were not hard to adjust; for his lady found that there was no refuge for her in her father's house; and so, after some sighs and tears, she accompanied her husband home. For all that had passed, things went on no better. She *would* convert the laird in spite of his teeth: The laird would not be converted. She *would* have the laird to say family prayers, both morning and evening: The laird would neither pray morning nor evening. He would not even sing psalms, and kneel beside her, while she performed the exercise; neither would he converse at all times, and in all places, about the sacred mysteries of religion, although his lady took occasion to contradict flatly every assertion that he made, in order that she might spiritualize him by drawing him into argument.

The laird kept his temper a long while, but at length his patience wore out; he cut her short in all her futile attempts at spiritualization, and mocked at her wire-drawn degrees of faith, hope, and repentance. He also dared to doubt of the great standard doctrine of absolute predestination, which put the crown on the lady's christian resentment. She declared her helpmate to be a limb of Antichrist, and one with whom no regenerated person could associate. She therefore bespoke a separate establishment, and before the expiry of the first six months, the arrangements of the separation were amicably adjusted. The upper, or third story of the old mansion-house, was awarded to the lady for her residence. She had a separate door, a separate stair, a separate garden, and walks that in no instance intersected the laird's; so that one would have thought the separation complete. They had each their own parties, selected from their own sort of people; and though the laird never once chafed himself about the lady's companies, it was not long before she began to inter-meddle about some of his.

'Who is that fat bouncing dame that visits the laird so often, and always by herself?' said she to her maid Martha one day.

'O dear, mem, how can I ken? We're banished frae our acquaintances here, as weel as frae the sweet gospel ordinances.'

'Find me out who that jolly dame is, Martha. You, who hold communion with the household of this ungodly man, can be at no loss to attain this information. I observe that she always casts her eye up toward our windows, both in coming and going; and I suspect that she seldom departs from the house empty-handed.'

That same evening Martha came with the information, that this august visitor was a Miss Logan, an old and intimate acquaintance of the laird's, and a very worthy respectable lady, of good connections, whose parents had lost their patrimony in the civil wars.

'Ha! very well!' said the lady; 'very well, Martha! But, nevertheless, go thou and watch this respectable lady's motions and behaviour the next time she comes to visit the laird, – and the next after that. You will not, I see, lack opportunities.'

Martha's information turned out of that nature, that prayers were said in the uppermost story of Dalcastle-house against the Canaanitish woman, every night and every morning; and great discontent prevailed there, even to anathemas and tears. Letter after letter was dispatched to Glasgow; and at length, to the lady's great consolation, the Rev. Mr Wringhim arrived safely and devoutly in her elevated sanctuary. Marvellous was the conversation between these gifted people. Wringhim had held in his doctrines that there were eight different kinds of FAITH, all perfectly distinct in their operations and effects. But the lady, in her secluded state, had discovered other five, – making twelve in all: the adjusting of the existence or fallacy of these five faiths served for a most enlightened discussion of nearly seventeen hours; in the course of which the two got warm in their arguments, always in proportion as they receded from nature, utility, and common sense. Wringhim at length got into unwonted fervour about some disputed point between one of these faiths and TRUST; when the lady, fearing that zeal was getting beyond its wonted barrier, broke in on his vehement asseverations with the following abrupt

discomfiture:- ‘But, Sir, as long as I remember, what is to be done with this case of open and avowed iniquity?’

The minister was struck dumb. He leaned him back on his chair, stroked his beard, hemmed – considered, and hemmed again; and then said, in an altered and softened tone, – ‘Why, that is a secondary consideration; you mean the case between your husband and Miss Logan?’

‘The same, Sir. I am scandalised at such intimacies going on under my nose. The sufferance of it is a great and crying evil.’

‘Evil, madam, may be either operative, or passive. To them it is an evil, but to us none. We have no more to do with the sins of the wicked and unconverted here, than with those of an infidel Turk; for all earthly bonds and fellowships are absorbed and swallowed up in the holy community of the Reformed Church. However, if it is your wish, I shall take him to task, and reprimand and humble him in such a manner, that *he* shall be ashamed of his doings, and renounce such deeds for ever, out of mere self-respect, though all unsanctified the heart, as well as the deed, may be. To the wicked, all things are wicked; but to the just, all things are just and right.’

‘Ah, that is a sweet and comfortable saying, Mr Wringhim! How delightful to think that a justified person can do no wrong! Who would not envy the liberty where-with we are made free? Go to my husband, that poor unfortunate, blindfolded person, and open his eyes to his degenerate and sinful state; for well are you fitted to the task.’

‘Yea, I will go in unto him, and confound him. I will lay the strong holds of sin and Satan as flat before my face, as the dung that is spread out to fatten the land.’

‘Master, there’s a gentleman at the fore-door wants a private word o’ye.’

‘Tell him I’m engaged: I can’t see any gentleman tonight. But I shall attend on him to-morrow as soon as he pleases.’

‘He’s coming straight in, Sir. – Stop a wee bit, Sir, my master is engaged. He cannot see you at present, Sir.’

‘Stand aside, thou Moabite! my mission admits of no delay. I come to save him from the jaws of destruction!’

‘An that be the case, Sir, it maks a wide difference; an’, as the danger may threaten us a’, I fancy I may as weel let ye gang by as fight wi’ye, sin’ ye seem sae intent on’t. – The man says he’s comin’ to save ye, an’ canna stop, Sir. – Here he is.’

The laird was going to break out into a volley of wrath against Waters, his servant; but before he got a word pronounced, the Rev. Mr Wringhim had stepped inside the room, and Waters had retired, shutting the door behind him.

No introduction could be more *mal-a-propos*: it is impossible; for at that very moment the laird and Arabella Logan were both sitting on one seat, and both looking on one book, when the door opened. ‘What is it, Sir?’ said the laird fiercely.

‘A message of the greatest importance, Sir,’ said the divine, striding unceremoniously up to the chimney, – turning his back to the fire, and his face to the culprits. – ‘I think you should know me, Sir?’ continued he, looking displeasedly at the laird, with his face half turned round.

‘I think I should,’ returned the laird. ‘You are a Mr How’stey-ca’-him, of Glasgow, who did me the worst turn ever I got done to me in my life. You gentry are always ready to do a man such a turn. Pray, Sir, did you ever do a good job for any one to counterbalance that? for, if you have not, you ought to be—.’

‘Hold, Sir, I say! None of your profanity before me. If I do evil to any one on such occasions, it is because he will have it so; therefore, the evil is not of my doing. I ask you, Sir, – before God and this witness, I ask you, have you kept solemnly and inviolate the vows which I laid upon you that day? Answer me?’

‘Has the partner whom you bound me to, kept hers inviolate? Answer me that, Sir? None can better do so than you, Mr How’s-tey-ca’-you.’

‘So, then, you confess your backslidings, and avow the profligacy of your life. And this person here, is, I suppose, the partner of your iniquity, – she whose beauty hath caused you to err! Stand up, both of you, till I rebuke you, and show you what you are in the eyes of God and man.’

‘In the first place, stand you still there, till I tell you what *you* are in the eyes of God and man: You are, Sir, a presumptuous, self-conceited pedagogue, a stirrer up of strife and commotion in church, in state, in families, and communities. You are one, Sir, whose righteousness consists in splitting the doctrines of Calvin into thousands of undistinguishable films, and in setting up a system of justifying-grace against all breaches of all laws, moral or divine. In short, Sir, you are a mildew, – a canker-worm in the bosom of the Reformed Church, generating a disease of which she will never be purged, but by the shedding of blood. Go thou in peace, and do these abominations no more; but humble thyself, lest a worse reproof

come upon thee.'

Wringhim heard all this without flinching. He now and then twisted his mouth in disdain, treasuring up, mean time, his vengeance against the two aggressors; for he felt that he had them on the hip, and resolved to pour out his vengeance and indignation upon them. Sorry am I, that the shackles of modern decorum restrain me from penning that famous rebuke; fragments of which have been attributed to every divine of old notoriety throughout Scotland. But I have it by heart; and a glorious morsel it is to put into the hands of certain incendiaries. The metaphors were so strong, and so appalling, that Miss Logan could only stand them a very short time: she was obliged to withdraw in confusion. The laird stood his ground with much ado, though his face was often crimsoned over with the hues of shame and anger. Several times he was on the point of turning the officious sycophant to the door; but good manners, and an inherent respect that he entertained for the clergy, as the immediate servants of the Supreme Being, restrained him.

Wringhim, perceiving these symptoms of resentment, took them for marks of shame and contrition, and pushed his reproaches farther than ever divine ventured to do in a similar case. When he had finished, to prevent further discussion, he walked slowly and majestically out of the apartment, making his robes to swing behind him in a most magisterial manner; he being, without doubt, elated with his high conquest. He went to the upper story, and related to his metaphysical associate his wonderful success; how he had driven the dame from the house in tears and deep confusion, and left the backsliding laird in such a quandary of shame and repentance, that he could neither articulate a word, nor lift up his countenance. The dame thanked him most cordially, lauding his friendly zeal and powerful eloquence; and then the two again set keenly to the splitting of hairs, and making distinctions in religion where none existed.

They being both children of adoption, and secured from falling into snares, or any way under the power of the wicked one, it was their custom, on each visit, to sit up a night in the same apartment, for the sake of sweet spiritual converse; but that time, in the course of the night, they differed so materially on a small point, somewhere between justification and final election, that the minister, in the heat of his zeal, sprung from his seat, paced the floor, and maintained his point with such ardour, that Martha was alarmed, and, thinking they were going to fight, and that the minister would be a hard match for her mistress, she put on some clothes, and twice left her bed and stood listening at the back of the door, ready to burst in should need require it. Should any one think this picture over-strained, I can assure him that it is taken from nature and from truth; but I will not likewise aver, that the theologist was neither crazed nor inebriated. If the listener's words were to be relied on, there was no love, no accommodating principle manifested between the two, but a fiery burning zeal, relating to points of such minor importance, that a true Christian would blush to hear them mentioned, and the infidel and profane make a handle of them to turn our religion to scorn.

Great was the dame's exultation at the triumph of her beloved pastor over her sinful neighbours in the lower parts of the house; and she boasted of it to Martha in high-sounding terms. But it was of short duration; for, in five weeks after that, Arabella Logan came to reside with the laird as his house-keeper, sitting at his table, and carrying the keys as mistress-substitute of the mansion. The lady's grief and indignation were now raised to a higher pitch than ever; and she set every agent to work, with whom she had any power, to effect a separation between these two suspected ones. Remonstrance was of no avail: George laughed at them who tried such a course, and retained his house-keeper, while the lady gave herself up to utter despair; for though she would not consort with her husband herself, she could not endure that any other should do so.

But, to countervail this grievous offence, our saintly and afflicted dame, in due time, was safely delivered of a fine boy, whom the laird acknowledged as his son and heir, and had him christened by his own name, and nursed in his own premises. He gave the nurse permission to take the boy to his mother's presence if ever she should desire to see him; but, strange as it may appear, she never once desired to see him from the day that he was born. The boy grew up, and was a healthful and happy child; and, in the course of another year, the lady presented him with a brother. A brother he certainly was, in the eye of the law, and it is more than probable that he was his brother in reality. But the laird thought otherwise; and, though he knew and acknowledged that he was obliged to support and provide for him, he refused to acknowledge him in other respects. He neither would countenance the banquet, nor take the baptismal vows on him in the child's name; of course, the poor boy had to live and remain an alien from the visible church for a year and a day; at which time, Mr Wringhim, out of pity and kindness, took the lady herself as sponsor for the boy, and baptized him by the name of Robert Wringhim, – that being the noted divine's own name.

George was brought up with his father, and educated partly at the parish-school, and partly at home, by a tutor hired for the purpose. He was a generous and kind-hearted youth; always ready to oblige, and

hardly ever dissatisfied with any body. Robert was brought up with Mr Wringhim, the laird paying a certain allowance for him yearly; and there the boy was early inured to all the sternness and severity of his pastor's arbitrary and unyielding creed. He was taught to pray twice every day, and seven times on Sabbath days; but he was only to pray for the elect, and, like David of old, doom all that were aliens from God to destruction. He had never, in that family into which he had been as it were adopted, heard ought but evil spoken of his reputed father and brother; consequently he held them in utter abhorrence, and prayed against them every day, often 'that the old hoary sinner might be cut off in the full flush of his iniquity, and be carried quick into hell; and that the young stem of the corrupt trunk might also be taken from a world that he disgraced, but that his sins might be pardoned, because he knew no better.'

Such were the tenets in which it would appear young Robert was bred. He was an acute boy, an excellent learner, had ardent and ungovernable passions, and withal, a sternness of demeanour from which other boys shrunk. He was the best grammarian, the best reader, writer, and accountant in the various classes that he attended, and was fond of writing essays on controverted points of theology, for which he got prizes, and great praise from his guardian and mother. George was much behind him in scholastic acquirements, but greatly his superior in personal prowess, form, feature, and all that constitutes gentility in deportment and appearance. The laird had often manifested to Miss Logan an earnest wish that the two young men should never meet, or at all events that they should be as little conversant as possible; and Miss Logan, who was as much attached to George as if he had been her own son, took every precaution, while he was a boy, that he should never meet with his brother; but as they advanced towards manhood, this became impraticable. The lady was removed from her apartments in her husband's house to Glasgow, to her great content; and all to prevent the young laird being tainted with the company of her and her second son; for the laird had felt the effects of the principles they professed, and dreaded them more than persecution, fire, and sword. During all the dreadful times that had overpast, though the laird had been a moderate man, he had still leaned to the side of the kingly prerogative, and had escaped confiscation and fines, without ever taking any active hand in suppressing the Covenanters. But after experiencing a specimen of their tenets and manner in his wife, from a secret favourer of them and their doctrines, he grew alarmed at the prevalence of such stern and factious principles, now that there was no check nor restraint upon them; and from that time he began to set himself against them, joining with the cavalier party of that day in all their proceedings.

It so happened, that, under the influence of the Earls of Seafield and Tullibardine, he was returned for a Member of Parliament in the famous session that sat at Edinburgh, when the Duke of Queensberry was commissioner, and in which party spirit ran to such an extremity. The young laird went with his father to the court, and remained in town all the time that the session lasted; and as all interested people of both factions flocked to the town at that period, so the important Mr Wringhim was there among the rest, during the greater part of the time, blowing the coal of revolutionary principles with all his might, in every society to which he could obtain admission. He was a great favourite with some of the west country gentlemen of that faction, by reason of his unbending impudence. No opposition could for a moment cause him either to blush, or retract one item that he had advanced. Therefore the Duke of Argyle and his friends made such use of him as sportsmen often do of terriers, to start the game, and make a great yelping noise to let them know whither the chace is proceeding. They often did this out of sport, in order to teaze their opponent; for of all pesterers that ever fastened on man he was the most insufferable: knowing that his coat protected him from manual chastisement, he spared no acrimony, and delighted in the chagrin and anger of those with whom he contended. But he was sometimes likewise *of real use* to the heads of the presbyterian faction, and therefore was admitted to their tables, and of course conceived himself a very great man.

His ward accompanied him; and very shortly after their arrival in Edinburgh, Robert, for the first time, met with the young laird his brother, in a match at tennis. The prowess and agility of the young squire drew forth the loudest plaudits of approval from his associates, and his own exertion alone carried the game every time on the one side, and that so far as all along to count three for their one. The hero's name soon ran round the circle, and when his brother Robert, who was an onlooker, learned who it was that was gaining so much applause, he came and stood close beside him all the time that the game lasted, always now and then putting in a cutting remark by way of mockery.

George could not help perceiving him, not only on account of his impertinent remarks, but he, moreover, stood so near him that he several times impeded him in his rapid evolutions, and of course got himself shoved aside in no very ceremonious way. Instead of making him keep his distance, these rude shocks and pushes, accompanied sometimes with hasty curses, only made him cling the closer to this king of the game. He seemed determined to maintain his right to his place as an onlooker, as well as any of those engaged in the game, and if they had tried him at an argument, he would have carried his point: or

perhaps he wished to quarrel with this spark of his jealousy and aversion, and draw the attention of the gay crowd to himself by these means; for like his guardian, he knew no other pleasure but what consisted in opposition. George took him for some impertinent student of divinity, rather set upon a joke than any thing else. He perceived a lad with black clothes, and a methodistical face, whose countenance and eye he disliked exceedingly, several times in his way, and that was all the notice he took of him the first time they two met. But the next day, and every succeeding one, the same devilish-looking youth attended him as constantly as his shadow; was always in his way as with intention to impede him, and ever and anon his deep and malignant eye met those of his elder brother with a glance so fierce that it sometimes startled him.

The very next time that George was engaged at tennis, he had not struck the ball above twice till the same intrusive being was again in his way. The party played for considerable stakes that day, namely, a dinner and wine at the Black Bull tavern; and George, as the hero and head of his party, was much interested in its honour; consequently, the sight of this moody and hellish-looking student affected him in no very pleasant manner. 'Pray, Sir, be so good as keep without the range of the ball,' said he.

'Is there any law or enactment that can compel me to do so?' said the other, biting his lip with scorn.

'If there is not, they are here that shall compel you,' returned George: 'so, friend, I rede you to be on your guard.'

As he said this, a flush of anger glowed in his handsome face, and flashed from his sparkling blue eye; but it was a stranger to both, and momently took its departure. The black-coated youth set up his cap before, brought his heavy brows over his deep dark eyes, put his hands in the pockets of his black plush breeches, and stepped a little farther into the semi-circle, immediately on his brother's right hand, than he had ever ventured to do before. There he set himself firm on his legs, and, with a face as demure as death, seemed determined to keep his ground. He pretended to be following the ball with his eyes; but every moment they were glancing aside at George. One of the competitors chanced to say rashly, in the moment of exultation, 'That's a d – d fine blow, George!' On which the intruder took up the word, as characteristic of the competitors, and repeated it every stroke that was given, making such a ludicrous use of it, that several of the on-lookers were compelled to laugh immoderately; but the players were terribly nettled at it, as he really contrived, by dint of sliding in some canonical terms, to render the competitors and their game ridiculous.

But matters at length came to a crisis that put them beyond sport. George, in flying backward to gain the point at which the ball was going to light, came inadvertently so rudely in contact with this obstreperous interloper, that he not only overthrew him, but also got a grievous fall over his legs; and, as he arose, the other made a spurn at him with his foot, which, if it had hit to its aim, would undoubtedly have finished the course of the young laird of Dalcastle and Balgrennan. George, being irritated beyond measure, as may well be conceived, especially at the deadly stroke aimed at him, struck the assailant with his racket, rather slightly, but so that his mouth and nose gushed out blood; and, at the same time, he said, turning to his cronies, – 'Does any of you know who the infernal puppy is?'

'Do you not know, Sir?' said one of the onlookers, a stranger: 'The gentleman is your own brother, Sir – Mr Robert Wringhim Colwan!'

'No, not Colwan, Sir,' said Robert, putting his hands in his pockets, and setting himself still farther forward than before, – 'not a Colwan, Sir; henceforth I disclaim the name.'

'No, certainly not,' repeated George: 'My mother's son you may be, – but *not a Colwan*! There you are right.' Then turning round to his informer, he said, 'Mercy be about us, Sir! is this the crazy minister's son from Glasgow?'

This question was put in the irritation of the moment; but it was too rude, and too far out of place, and no one deigned any answer to it. He felt the reproof, and felt it deeply; seeming anxious for some opportunity to make an acknowledgment, or some reparation.

In the meantime, young Wringhim was an object to all of the uttermost disgust. The blood flowing from his mouth and nose he took no pains to stem, neither did he so much as wipe it away; so that it spread over all his cheeks, and breast, even off at his toes. In that state did he take up his station in the middle of the competitors; and he did not now keep his place, but ran about, impeding every one who attempted to make at the ball. They loaded him with execrations, but it availed nothing; he seemed courting persecution and buffetings, keeping stedfastly to his old joke of damnation, and marring the game so completely, that, in spite of every effort on the part of the players, he forced them to stop their game, and give it up. He was such a rueful-looking object, covered with blood, that none of them had the heart to kick him, although it appeared the only thing he wanted; and as for George, he said not another word to him, either in anger or reproof.

When the game was fairly given up, and the party were washing their hands in the stone fount, some of

them besought Robert Wringhim to wash himself; but he mocked at them, and said, he was much better as he was. George, at length, came forward abashedly toward him, and said, – 'I have been greatly to blame, Robert, and am very sorry for what I have done. But, in the first instance, I erred through ignorance, not knowing you were my brother, which you certainly are; and, in the second, through a momentary irritation, for which I am ashamed. I pray you, therefore, to pardon me, and give me your hand.'

As he said this, he held out his hand toward his polluted brother; but the froward predestinarian took not his from his breeches pocket, but lifting his foot, he gave his brother's hand a kick. 'I'll give you what will suit such a hand better than mine,' said he, with a sneer. And then, turning lightly about, he added, – 'Are there to be no more of these d – d fine blows, gentlemen? For shame, to give up such a profitable and edifying game!'

'This is too bad,' said George. 'But, since it is thus, I have the less to regret.' And, having made this general remark, he took no more note of the uncouth aggressor. But the persecution of the latter terminated not on the play-ground: he ranked up among them, bloody and disgusting as he was, and, keeping close by his brother's side, he marched along with the party all the way to the Black Bull. Before they got there, a great number of boys and idle people had surrounded them, hooting and incommoding them exceedingly, so that they were glad to get into the inn; and the unaccountable monster actually tried to get in alongst with them, to make one of the party at dinner. But the innkeeper and his men, getting the hint, by force prevented him from entering, although he attempted it again and again, both by telling lies and offering a bribe. Finding he could not prevail, he set to exciting the mob at the door to acts of violence; in which he had like to have succeeded. The landlord had no other shift, at last, but to send privately for two officers, and have him carried to the guard-house; and the hilarity and joy of the party of young gentlemen, for the evening, was quite spoiled, by the inauspicious termination of their game.

The Rev. Robert Wringhim was now to send for, to release his beloved ward. The messenger found him at table, with a number of the leaders of the Whig faction, the Marquis of Annandale being in the chair; and the prisoner's note being produced, Wringhim read it aloud, accompanying it with some explanatory remarks. The circumstances of the case being thus magnified and distorted, it excited the utmost abhorrence, both of the deed and the perpetrators, among the assembled faction. They declaimed against the act as an unnatural attempt on the character, and even the life, of an unfortunate brother, who had been expelled from his father's house. And, as party spirit was the order of the day, an attempt was made to lay the burden of it to that account. In short, the young culprit got some of the best blood of the land to enter as his securities, and was set at liberty. But when Wringhim perceived the plight that he was in, he took him, as he was, and presented him to his honourable patrons. This raised the indignation against the young laird and his associates a thousand fold, which actually roused the party to temporary madness. They were, perhaps, a little excited by the wine and spirits they had swallowed; else a casual quarrel between two young men, at tennis, could not have driven them to such extremes. But certain it is, that from one at first arising to address the party on the atrocity of the offence, both in a moral and political point of view, on a sudden there were six on their feet, at the same time, expatiating on it; and, in a very short time thereafter, every one in the room was up, talking with the utmost vociferation, all on the same subject, and all taking the same side in the debate.

In the midst of this confusion, some one or other issued from the house, which was at the back of the Canongate, calling out, – 'A plot, a plot! Treason, treason! Down with the bloody incendiaries at the Black Bull!'

The concourse of people that were assembled in Edinburgh at that time was prodigious; and as they were all actuated by political motives, they wanted only a ready-blown coal to set the mountain on fire. The evening being fine, and the streets thronged, the cry ran from mouth to mouth through the whole city. More than that, the mob that had of late been gathered to the door of the Black Bull, had, by degrees, dispersed; but, they being young men, and idle vagrants, they had only spread themselves over the rest of the street to lounge in search of farther amusement: consequently, a word was sufficient to send them back to their late rendezvous, where they had previously witnessed something they did not much approve of.

The master of the tavern was astonished at seeing the mob again assembling; and that with such hurry and noise. But his inmates being all of the highest respectability, he judged himself sure of protection, or, at least, of indemnity. He had two large parties in his house at the time; the largest of which was of the Revolutionist faction. The other consisted of our young tennis-players, and their associates, who were all of the Jacobite order; or, at all events, leaned to the Episcopal side. The largest party were in a front-room; and the attack of the mob fell first on their windows, though rather with fear and caution. Jingle

went one pane; then a loud hurra; and that again was followed by a number of voices, endeavouring to restrain the indignation from venting itself in destroying the windows, and to turn it on the inmates. The Whigs, calling the landlord, inquired what the assault meant: he cunningly answered, that he suspected it was some of the youths of the Cavalier, or High-Church party, exciting the mob against them. The party consisted mostly of young gentlemen, by that time in a key to engage in any row; and, at all events, to suffer nothing from the other party, against whom their passions were mightily inflamed.

The landlord, therefore, had no sooner given them the spirit-rousing intelligence, than every one, as by instinct, swore his own natural oath, and grasped his own natural weapon. A few of those of the highest rank were armed with swords, which they boldly drew; those of the subordinate orders immediately flew to such weapons as the room, kitchen, and scullery afforded; – such as tongs, pokers, spits, racks, and shovels; and breathing vengeance on the prelatic party, the children of Antichrist and the heirs of d – n – t – n! the barterers of the liberties of their country, and betrayers of the most sacred trust, – thus elevated, and thus armed, in the cause of right, justice, and liberty, our heroes rushed to the street, and attacked the mob with such violence, that they broke the mass in a moment, and dispersed their thousands like chaff before the wind. The other party of young Jacobites, who sat in a room farther from the front, and were those against whom the fury of the mob was meant to have been directed, knew nothing of this second uproar, till the noise of the sally made by the Whigs assailed their ears; being then informed that the mob had attacked the house on account of the treatment they themselves had given to a young gentleman of the adverse faction, and that another jovial party had issued from the house in their defence, and was now engaged in an unequal combat, the sparks likewise flew to the field to back their defenders with all their prowess, without troubling their heads about who they were.

A mob is like a spring-tide in an eastern storm, that retires only to return with more overwhelming fury. The crowd was taken by surprise, when such a strong and well-armed party issued from the house with so great fury, laying all prostrate that came in their way. Those who were next to the door, and were, of course, the first whom the imminent danger assailed, rushed backward among the crowd with their whole force. The Black Bull standing in a small square half way between the High Street and the Cowgate, and the entrance to it being by two closes, into these the pressure outward was simultaneous, and thousands were moved to an involuntary flight they knew not why.

But the High Street of Edinburgh, which they soon reached, is a dangerous place in which to make an open attack upon a mob. And it appears that the entrances to the tavern had been somewhere near to the Cross, on the south side of the street; for the crowd fled with great expedition, both to the east and west, and the conquerors, separating themselves as chance directed, pursued impetuously, wounding and maiming as they flew. But, it so chanced, that before either of the wings had followed the flying squadrons of their enemies for the space of a hundred yards each way, the devil an enemy they had to pursue! the multitude had vanished like so many thousands of phantoms! What could our heroes do? – Why, they faced about to return toward their citadel, the Black Bull. But that feat was not so easily, nor so readily accomplished, as they divined. The unnumbered alleys on each side of the street had swallowed up the multitude in a few seconds; but from these they were busy reconnoitring; and, perceiving the deficiency in the number of their assailants, the rush from both sides of the street was as rapid, and as wonderful, as the disappearance of the crowd had been a few minutes before. Each close vomited out its levies, and these better armed with missiles than when they sought it for a temporary retreat. Woe then to our two columns of victorious Whigs! The mob actually closed around them as they would have swallowed them up; and, in the meanwhile, shower after shower of the most abominable weapons of offence were rained in upon them. If the gentlemen were irritated before, this inflamed them still farther; but their danger was now so apparent, they could not shut their eyes on it, therefore, both parties, as if actuated by the same spirit, made a desperate effort to join, and the greater part effected it; but some were knocked down, and others were separated from their friends, and blithe to become silent members of the mob.

The battle now raged immediately in front of the closes leading to the Black Bull; the small body of Whig gentlemen was hardly bested, and it is likely would have been overcome and trampled down every man, had they not been then and there joined by the young Cavaliers; who, fresh to arms, broke from the wynd, opened the head of the passage, laid about them manfully, and thus kept up the spirits of the exasperated Whigs, who were the men in fact that wrought the most deray among the populace.

The town-guard was now on the alert; and two companies of the Cameronian regiment, with the Hon. Captain Douglas, rushed down from the Castle to the scene of action; but, for all the noise and hubbub that these caused in the street, the combat had become so close and inveterate, that numbers of both sides were taken prisoners fighting hand to hand, and could scarcely be separated when the guardsmen and soldiers had them by the necks.

Great was the alarm and confusion that night in Edinburgh; for every one concluded that it was a party scuffle, and, the two parties being so equal in power, the most serious consequences were anticipated. The agitation was so prevailing, that every party in the town, great and small, was broken up; and the lord-commissioner thought proper to go to the council-chamber himself, even at that late hour, accompanied by the sheriffs of Edinburgh and Linlithgow, with sundry noblemen besides, in order to learn something of the origin of the affray.

For a long time the court was completely puzzled. Every gentleman brought in exclaimed against the treatment he had received, in most bitter terms, blaming a mob set on him and his friends by the adverse party, and matters looked extremely ill, until at length they began to perceive that they were examining gentlemen of both parties, and that they had been doing so from the begining, almost alternately, so equally had the prisoners been taken from both parties. Finally, it turned out, that a few gentlemen, two-thirds of whom were strenuous Whigs themselves, had joined in mauling the whole Whig population of Edinburgh. The investigation disclosed nothing the effect of which was not ludicrous; and the Duke of Queensberry, whose aims was at that time to conciliate the two factions, tried all that he could to turn the whole *fracas* into a joke – an unlucky frolic, where no ill was meant on either side, and which yet had been productive of a great deal.

The greater part of the people went home satisfied; but not so the Rev. Robert Wringhim. He did all that he could to inflame both judges and populace against the young Cavaliers, especially against the young Laird of Dalcastle, whom he represented as an incendiary, set on by an unnatural parent to slander his mother, and make away with a hapless and only brother; and, in truth, that declaimer against all human merit had that sort of powerful, homely, and bitter eloquence, which seldom missed affecting his hearers: the consequence at that time was, that he made the unfortunate affair between the two brothers appear in extremely bad colours, and the populace retired to their homes impressed with no very favourable opinion of either the Laird of Dalcastle or his son George, neither of whom were there present to speak for themselves.

As for Wringhim himself, he went home to his lodgings, filled with gall and with spite against the young laird, whom he was made to believe the aggressor, and that intentionally. But most of all was he filled with indignation against the father, whom he held in abhorrence at all times, and blamed solely for this unmannerly attack made on his favourite ward, namesake, and adopted son; and for the public imputation of a crime to his own reverence, in calling the lad *his* son, and thus charging him with a sin against which he was well known to have levelled all the arrows of church censure with unsparing might.

But, filled as his heart was with some portion of these bad feelings, to which all flesh is subject, he kept, nevertheless, the fear of the Lord always before his eyes so far as never to omit any of the external duties of religion, and farther than that, man hath no power to pry. He lodged with the family of a Mr Miller, whose lady was originally from Glasgow, and had been a hearer, and, of course, a great admirer of Mr Wringhim. In that family he made public worship every evening; and that night, in his petitions at a throne of grace, he prayed for so many vials of wrath to be poured on the head of some particular sinner, that the hearers trembled, and stopped their ears. But that he might not proceed with so violent a measure, amounting to excommunication, without due scripture warrant, he began the exercise of the evening by singing the following verses, which it is a pity should ever have been admitted into a Christian psalmody, being so adverse to all its mild and benevolent principles:

Set thou the wicked over him,
And upon his right hand
Give thou his greatest enemy,
Even Satan, leave to stand.
And when by thee he shall be judged,
Let him remembered be;
And let his prayer be turned to sin,
When he shall call on thee.
Few be his days; and in his room
His charge another take;
His children let be fatherless;
His wife a widow make:
Let God his father’s wickedness
Still to remembrance call;
And never let his mother’s sin
Be blotted out at all.

As he in cursing pleasure took,
So let it to him fall;
As he delighted not to bless,
So bless him not at all.
As cursing he like clothes put on,
Into his bowels so,
Like water, and into his bones
Like oil, down let it go.

Young Wringhim only knew the full purport of this spiritual song; and went to his bed better satisfied than ever, that his father and brother were cast-aways, reprobates, aliens from the church and the true faith, and cursed in time and eternity

The next day George and his companions met as usual, – all who were not seriously wounded of them. But as they strolled about the city, the rancorous eye and the finger of scorn was pointed against them. None of them was at first aware of the reason; but it threw a damp over their spirits and enjoyments, which they could not master. They went to take a forenoon game at their old play of tennis, not on a match, but by way of improving themselves; but they had not well taken their places till young Wringhim appeared in his old station, at his brother's right hand, with looks more demure and determined than ever. His lips were primmed so close that his mouth was hardly discernible, and his dark deep eye flashed gleams of holy indignation on the godless set, but particularly on his brother. His presence acted as a mildew on all social intercourse or enjoyment; the game was marred, and ended ere ever it was well begun. There were whisperings apart – the party separated; and, in order to shake off the blighting influence of this dogged persecutor, they entered sundry houses of their acquaintances, with an understanding that they were to meet on the Links for a game at cricket.

They did so; and, stripping off part of their clothes, they began that violent and spirited game. They had not played five minutes, till Wringhim was stalking in the midst of them, and totally impeding the play. A cry arose from all corners of 'O, this will never do. Kick him out of the playground! Knock down the scoundrel; or bind him, and let him lie in peace.'

'By no means,' cried George: 'it is evident he wants nothing else. Pray do not humour him so much as to touch him with either foot or finger.' Then turning to a friend, he said in a whisper, 'Speak to him, Gordon; he surely will not refuse to let us have the ground to ourselves, if you request it of him.'

Gordon went up to him, and requested of hi, civilly, but ardently, 'to retire to a certain distance, else none of them could or would be answerable, however sore he might be hurt.'

He turned disdainfully on his heel, uttered a kind of pulpit hem! and then added, 'I will take my chance of that; hurt me, any of you, at your peril.'

The young gentlemen smiled, through spite and disdain of the dogged animal. Gordon followed him up, and tried to remonstrate with him; but he let him know that 'it was his pleasure to be there at that time; and, unless he could demonstrate to him what superior right he and his party had to that ground, in preference to him, and to the exclusion of all others, he was determined to assert his right, and the rights of his fellow-citizens, by keeping possession of whatsoever part of that common field he chose.'

'You are no gentleman, Sir,' said Gordon.

'Are you one, Sir?' said the other.

'Yes, Sir, I will let you know that I am, by G—!'

'Then, thanks be to Him whose name you have profaned, I am none. If *one* of the party be a gentleman, *I do hope in God I am not!*'

It was now apparent to them all that he was courting obloquy and manual chastisement from their hands, if by any means he could provoke them to the deed; and, apprehensive that he had some sinister and deep-laid design in hunting after such a singular favour, they wisely restrained one another from inflicting the punishment that each of them yearned to bestow, personally, and which he so well deserved.

But the unpopularity of the Younger George Colwan could no longer be concealed from his associates. It was manifested wherever the populace were assembled; and his young and intimate friend, Adam Gordon, was obliged to warn him of the circumstance, that he might not be surprised at the gentlemen of their acquaintance withdrawing themselves from his society, as they could not be seen with him without being insulted. George thanked him; and it was agreed between them, that the former should keep himself retired during the daytime while he remained in Edinburgh, and that at night they should always meet together, along with such of their companions as were disengaged.

George found it every day more and more necessary to adhere to this system of seclusion; for it was not

alone the hisses of the boys and populace that pursued him, – a fiend of more malignant aspect was ever at his elbow, in the form of his brother. To whatever place of amusement he betook himself, and however well he concealed his intentions of going there from all flesh living, there was his brother Wringhim also, and always within a few yards of him, generally about the same distance, and ever and anon darting looks at him that chilled his very soul. They were looks that cannot be described; but they were felt piercing to the bosom's deepest core. They affected even the on-lookers in a very particular manner, for all whose eyes caught a glimpse of these hideous glances followed them to the object toward which they were darted: the gentlemanly and mild demeanour of that object generally calmed their startled apprehensions; for no one ever yet noted the glances of the young man's eye in the black coat, at the face of his brother, who did not at first manifest strong symptoms of alarm.

George became utterly confounded; not only at the import of this persecution, but how in the world it came to pass that this unaccountable being knew all his motions, and every intention of his heart, as it were intuitively. On consulting his own previous feelings and resolutions, he found that the circumstances of his going to such and such a place were often the most casual incidents in nature – the caprice of a moment had carried him there, and yet he had never sat or stood many minutes till there was the self-same being, always in the same position with regard to himself, as regularly as the shadow is cast from the substance, or the ray of light from the opposing denser medium.

For instance, he remembered one day of setting out with the intention of going to attend divine worship in the High Church, and when within a short space of its door, he was overtaken by young Kilpatrick of Closeburn, who was bound to the Grey-Friars to see his sweetheart, as he said; 'and if you will go with me, Colwan,' said he, 'I will let you see her too, and then you will be just as far forward as I am.'

George assented at once, and went; and after taking his seat, he leaned his head forward on the pew to repeat over to himself a short ejaculatory prayer, as had always been his custom on entering the house of God. When he had done, he lifted his eyes naturally toward that point on his right hand where the fierce apparition of his brother had been wont to meet his view: there he was, in the same habit, form, demeanour, and precise point of distance, as usual! George again laid down his head, and his mind was so astounded, that he had nearly fallen into a swoon. He tried shortly after to muster up courage to look at the speaker, at the congregation, and at Captain Kilpatrick's sweetheart in particular; but the fiendish glances of the young man in the black clothes were too appalling to be withstood, – his eye caught them whether he was looking that way or not: at length his courage was fairly mastered, and he was obliged to look down during the remainder of the service.

By night or by day it was the same. In the gallery of the Parliament House, in the boxes of the play-house, in the church, in the assembly, in the streets, suburbs, and the fields; and every day, and every hour, from the first rencounter of the two, the attendance became more and more constant, more inexplicable, and altogether more alarming and insufferable, until at last George was fairly driven from society, and forced to spend his days in his own and his father's lodgings with closed doors. Even there, he was constantly harassed with the idea, that the next time he lifted his eyes, he would to a certainty see that face, the most repulsive to all his feelings of aught the earth contained. The attendance of that brother was now become like the attendance of a demon on some devoted being that had sold himself to destruction; his approaches as undiscerned, and his looks as fraught with hideous malignity. It was seldom that he saw him either following him in the streets, or entering any house or church after him; he only appeared in his place, George wist not how, or whence; and, having sped so ill in his first friendly approaches, he had never spoken to his equivocal attendant a second time.

It came at length into George's head, as he was pondering, by himself, on the circumstances of this extraordinary attendance, that perhaps his brother had relented, and, though of so sullen and unaccommodating a temper that he would not acknowledge it, or beg a reconciliation, it might be for that very purpose that he followed his steps night and day in that extraordinary manner. 'I cannot for my life see for what other purpose it can be,' thought he. 'He never offers to attempt my life; nor dares he, if he had the inclination; therefore, although his manner is peculiarly repulsive to me, I shall not have my mind burdened with the reflection, that my own mother's son yearned for a reconciliation with me, and was repulsed by my haughty and insolent behaviour. The next time he comes to my hand, I am resolved that I will accost him as one brother ought to address another, whatever it may cost me; and, if I am still flouted with disdain, then shall the blame rest with him.'

After this generous resolution, it was a good while before his gratuitous attendant appeared at his side again; and George began to think that his visits were discontinued. The hope was a relief that could not be calculated; but still George had a feeling that it was too supreme to last. His enemy had been too pertinacious to abandon his design, whatever it was. He, however, began to indulge in a little more

liberty, and for several days he enjoyed it with impunity.

George was, from infancy, of a stirring active disposition, and could not endure confinement; and, having been of late much restrained in his youthful exercises by this singular persecutor, he grew uneasy under such restraint, and, one morning, chancing to awaken very early, he arose to make an excursion to the top of Arthur's Seat, to breathe the breeze of the dawning, and see the sun arise out of the eastern ocean. The morning was calm and serene; and as he walked down the south back of the Canongate, toward the Palace, the haze was so close around him that he could not see the houses on the opposite side of the way. As he passed the lord-commissioner's house, the guards were in attendance, who cautioned him not to go by the Palace, as all the gates would be shut and guarded for an hour to come, on which he went by the back of St Anthony's gardens, and found his way into that little romantic glade adjoining to the Saint's chapel and well. He was still involved in a blue haze, like a dense smoke, but yet in the midst of it the respiration was the most refreshing and delicious. The grass and the flowers were loaden with dew; and, on taking off his hat to wipe his forehead, he perceived that the black glossy fur of which his chaperon was wrought, was all covered with a tissue of the most delicate silver – a fairy web, composed of little spheres, so minute that no eye could discern any one of them; yet there they were shining in lovely millions. Afraid of defacing so beautiful and so delicate a garnish, he replaced his hat with the greatest caution, and went on his way light of heart.

As he approached the swire at the head of the dell, – that little delightful verge from which in one moment the eastern limits and shores of Lothian arise on the view, – as he approached it, I say, and a little space from the height, he beheld, to his astonishment, a bright halo in the cloud of haze, that rose in a semi-circle over his head like a pale rainbow. He was struck motionless at the view of the lovely vision; for it so chanced that he had never seen the same appearance before, though common at early morn. But he soon perceived the cause of the phenomenon, and that it proceeded from the rays of the sun from a pure unclouded morning sky striking upon this dense vapour which refracted them. But the better all the works of nature are understood, the more they will be ever admired. That was a scene that would have entranced the man of science with delight, but which the uninitiated and sordid man would have regarded less than the mole rearing up his hill in silence and in darkness.

George did admire this halo of glory, which still grew wider, and less defined, as he approached the surface of the cloud. But, to his utter amazement and supreme delight, he found, on reaching the top of Arthur's Seat, that this sublunary rainbow, this terrestrial glory, was spread in its most vivid hues beneath his feet. Still he could not perceive the body of the sun, although the light behind him was dazzling; but the cloud of haze lying dense in that deep dell that separates the hill from the rocks of Salisbury, and the dull shadow of the hill mingling with that cloud, made the dell a pit of darkness. On that shadowy cloud was the lovely rainbow formed, spreading itself on a horizontal plain, and having a slight and brilliant shade of all the colours of the heavenly bow, but all of them paler and less defined. But this terrestrial phenomenon of the early morn cannot be better delineated than by the name given of it by the shepherd boys, 'The little wee ghost of the rainbow.'

Such was the description of the morning, and the wild shades of the hill, that George gave to his father and Mr Adam Gordon that same day on which he had witnessed them; and it is necessary that the reader should comprehend something of their nature, to understand what follows.

He seated himself on the pinnacle of the rocky precipice, a little within the top of the hill to the westward, and, with a light and buoyant heart, viewed the beauties of the morning, and inhaled its salubrious breeze. 'Here,' thought he, 'I can converse with nature without disturbance, and without being intruded on by any appalling or obnoxious visitor.' The idea of his brother's dark and malevolent looks coming at that moment across his mind, he turned his eyes instinctively to the right, to the point where that unwelcome guest was wont to make his appearance. Gracious Heaven! What an apparition was there presented to his view! He saw, delineated in the cloud, the shoulders, arms, and features of a human being of the most dreadful aspect. The face was the face of his brother, but dilated to twenty times the natural size. Its dark eyes gleamed on him through the mist, while every furrow of its hideous brow frowned deep as the ravines on the brow of the hill. George started, and his hair stood up in bristles as he gazed on this horrible monster. He saw every feature, and every line of the face, distinctly, as it gazed on him with an intensity that was hardly brookable. Its eyes were fixed on him, in the same manner as those of some carnivorous animal fixed on its prey; and yet there was fear and trembling, in these unearthly features, as plainly depicted as murderous malice. The giant apparition seemed sometimes to be cowering down as in terror, so that nothing but its brow and eyes were seen; still these never turned one moment from their object – again it rose imperceptibly up, and began to approach with great caution; and as it neared, the dimensions of its form lessened, still continuing, however, far above the natural size.

George conceived it to be a spirit. He could conceive it to be nothing else; and he took it for some

horrid demon by which he was haunted, that had assumed the features of his brother in every lineament, but in taking on itself the human form, had miscalculated dreadfully on the size, and presented itself thus to him in a blown-up, dilated frame of embodied air, exhaled from the caverns of death or the regions of devouring fire. He was farther confirmed in the belief that it was a malignant spirit, on perceiving that it approached him across the front of a precipice, where there was not footing for thing of mortal frame. Still, what with terror and astonishment, he continued rivetted to the spot, till it approached, as he deemed, to within two yards of him; and then, perceiving that it was setting itself to make a violent spring on him, he started to his feet and fled distractedly in the opposite direction, keeping his eye cast behind him lest he had been seized in that dangerous place. But the very first bolt that he made in his flight he came in contact with a *real* body of flesh and blood, and that with such violence that both went down among some scragged rocks, and George rolled over the other. The being called out 'Murder;' and, rising, fled precipitately. George then perceived that it was his brother; and, being confounded between the shadow and the substance, he knew not what he was doing or what he had done; and there being only one natural way of retreat from the brink of the rock, he likewise arose and pursued the affrighted culprit with all his speed towards the top of the hill. Wringhim was braying out 'Murder! murder!' at which George being disgusted, and his spirits all in a ferment from some hurried idea of intended harm, the moment he came up with the craven he seized him rudely by the shoulder, and clapped his hand on his mouth. 'Murder, you beast!' said he; 'what do you mean by roaring out murder in that way? Who the devil is murdering you, or offering to murder you?'

Wringhim forced his mouth from under his brother's hand, and roared with redoubled energy, 'Eh! Egh! murder! murder!' &c. George had felt resolute to put down this shocking alarm, lest some one might hear it and fly to the spot, or draw inferences widely different from the truth; and, perceiving the terror of this elect youth to be so great that expostulation was vain, he seized him by the mouth and nose with his left hand, so strenuously, that he sunk his fingers into his cheeks. But the poltroon still attempting to bray out, George gave him such a stunning blow with his fist on the left temple, that he crumbled, as it were, to the ground, but more from the effects of terror than those of the blow. His nose, however, again gushed out blood, a system of defence which seemed as natural to him as that resorted to by the race of stinkards. He then raised himself on his knees and hams, and raising up his ghastly face, while the blood streamed over both ears, he besought his life of his brother, in the most abject whining manner, gaping and blubbering most piteously.

'Tell me then, Sir,' said George, resolved to make the most of the wretch's terror – 'tell me for what purpose it is that you thus haunt my steps? Tell me plainly, and instantly, else I will throw you from the verge of that precipice.'

'Oh, I will never do it again! I will never do it again! Spare my life, dear, good brother! Spare my life! Sure I never did you any hurt?'

'Swear to me, then, by the God that made you, that you will never henceforth follow after me to torment me with your hellish threatening looks; swear that you will never again come into my presence without being invited. Will you take an oath to this effect?'

'O yes! I will, I will!'

'But this is not all: you must tell me for what purpose you sought me out here this morning?'

'Oh, brother! for nothing but your good. I had nothing at heart but your unspeakable profit, and great and endless good.'

'So then, you indeed knew that I was here?'

'I was told so by a friend, but I did not believe him; a – a – at least I did not know it was true till I saw you.'

'Tell me this one thing, then, Robert, and all shall be forgotten and forgiven, – Who was that friend?'

'You do not know him.'

'How then does he know me?'

'I cannot tell.'

'Was he here present with you to-day?'

'Yes; he was not far distant. He came to this hill with me.'

'Where then is he now?'

'I cannot tell.'

'Then, wretch, confess that the devil was that friend who told you I was here, and who came here with you? None else could possibly know of my being here.'

'Ah! how little you know of him! Would you argue that there is neither man nor spirit endowed with so much foresight as to deduce natural conclusions from previous actions and incidents but the devil? Alas, brother! But why should I wonder at such abandoned notions and principles? It was fore-ordained that

you should cherish them, and that they should be the ruin of your soul and body, before the world was framed. Be assured of this, however, that I had no aim in seeking you *but your good!*'

'Well, Robert, I will believe it. I am disposed to be hasty and passionate: it is a fault in my nature; but I never meant, or wished you evil; and God is my witness that I would as soon stretch out my hand to my own life, or my father's, as to yours.' – At these words, Wringhim uttered a hollow exulting laugh, put his hands in his pockets, and withdrew a space to his accustomed distance. George continued: 'And now, once for all, I request that we may exchange forgiveness, and that we may part and remain friends.'

'Would such a thing be expedient, think you? Or consistent with the glory of God? I doubt it.'

'I can think of nothing that would be more so. Is it not consistent with every precept of the Gospel? Come, brother, say that our reconciliation is complete.'

'O yes, certainly! I tell you, brother, according to the flesh: it is just as complete as the lark's is with the adder; no more so, nor ever can. Reconciled, forsooth! To what would I be reconciled?'

As he said this, he strode indignantly away. From the moment that he heard his life was safe, he assumed his former insolence and revengeful looks – and never were they more dreadful than on parting with his brother that morning on the top of the hill. 'Well, go thy ways,' said George; 'some would despise, but I pity thee. If thou art not a limb of Satan, I never saw one.'

The sun had now dispelled the vapours; and the morning being lovely beyond description, George sat himself down on the top of the hill, and pondered deeply on the unaccountable incident that had befallen to him that morning. He could in nowise comprehend it; but, taking it with other previous circumstances, he could not get quit of a conviction that he was haunted by some evil genius in the shape of his brother, as well as by that dark and mysterious wretch himself. In no other way could he account for the apparition he saw that morning on the face of the rock, nor for several sudden appearances of the same being, in places where there was no possibility of any foreknowledge that he himself was to be there, and as little that the same being, if he were flesh and blood like other men, could always start up in the same position with regard to him. He determined, therefore, on reaching home, to relate all that had happened, from beginning to end, to his father, asking his counsel and his assistance, although he knew full well that his father was not the fittest man in the world to solve such a problem. He was now involved in party politics, over head and ears; and, moreover, he could never hear the names of either of the Wringhims mentioned without getting into a quandary of disgust and anger; and all that he would deign to say of them was, to call them by all the opprobrious names he could invent.

It turned out as the young man from the first suggested: old Dalcastle would listen to nothing concerning them with any patience. George complained that his brother harassed him with his presence at all times, and in all places. Old Dal asked why he did not kick the dog out of his presence, whenever he felt him disagreeable? George said, he seemed to have some demon for a familiar. Dal answered, that he did not wonder a bit at that, for the young spark was the third in a direct line who had all been children of adultery; and it was well known that all such were born half deils themselves, and nothing was more likely than that they should hold intercourse with their fellows. In the same style did he sympathise with all his son's late sufferings and perplexities.

In Mr Adam Gordon, however, George found a friend who entered into all his feelings, and had seen and knew every thing about the matter. He tried to convince him, that at all events there could be nothing supernatural in the circumstances; and that the vision he had seen on the rock, among the thick mist, was the shadow of his brother approaching behind him. George could not swallow this, for he had seen his own shadow on the cloud, and, instead of approaching to aught like his own figure, he perceived nothing but a halo of glory round a point of the cloud, that was whiter and purer than the rest. Gordon said, if he would go with him to a mountain of his father's, which he named, in Aberdeenshire, he would show him a giant spirit of the same dimensions, any morning at the rising of the sun, provided he shone on that spot. This statement excited George's curiosity exceedingly; and, being disgusted with some things about Edinburgh, and glad to get out of the way, he consented to go with Gordon to the Highlands for a space. The day was accordingly set for their departure, the old laird's assent obtained; and the two young sparks parted in a state of great impatience for their excursion.

One of them found out another engagement, however, the instant after this last was determined on. Young Wringhim went off the hill that morning, and home to his upright gaurdian again, without washing the blood from his face and neck; and there he told a most woful story indeed: How he had gone out to take a morning's walk on the hill, where he had encountered with his reprobate brother among the mist, who had knocked him down and very near murdered him; threatening dreadfully, and with horrid oaths, to throw him from the top of the cliff.

The wrath of the great divine was kindled beyond measure. He cursed the aggressor in the name of the Most High; and bound himself, by an oath, to cause that wicked one's transgressions return upon his own

head sevenfold. But before he engaged farther in the business of vengeance, he kneeled with his adopted son, and committed the whole cause unto the Lord, whom he addressed as one coming breathing burning coals of juniper, and casting his lightnings before him, to destroy and root out all who had moved hand or tongue against the children of the promise. Thus did he arise confirmed, and go forth to certain conquest.

We cannot enter into the detail of the events that now occurred, without forestalling a part of the narrative of one who knew all the circumstances – was deeply interested in them, and whose relation is of higher value than any thing that can be retailed out of the stores of tradition and old registers; but, his narrative being different from these, it was judged expedient to give the account as thus publicly handed down to us. Suffice it, that, before evening, George was apprehended, and lodged in jail, on a criminal charge of an assault and battery, to the shedding of blood, with the intent of committing fratricide. Then was the old laird in great consternation, and blamed himself for treating the thing so lightly, which seemed to have been gone about, from the beginning, so systematically, and with an intent which the villains were now going to realize, namely, to get the young laird disposed of, and then his brother, in spite of the old gentleman's teeth, would be laird himself.

Old Dal now set his whole interest to work among the noblemen and lawyers of his party. His son's case looked exceedingly ill, owing to the former assault before witnesses, and the unbecoming expressions made use of by him on that occasion, as well as from the present assault, which George did not deny, and for which no moving cause or motive could be made to appear.

On his first declaration before the sheriff, matters looked no better: but then the sheriff was a Whig. It is well known how differently the people of the present day, in Scotland, view the cases of their own party-men, and those of opposite political principles. But this day is nothing to that in such matters, although, God knows, they are still sometimes barefaced enough. It appeared, from all the witnesses in the first case, that the complainant was the first aggressor – that he refused to stand out of the way, though apprised of his danger; and when his brother came against him inadvertently, he had aimed a blow at him with his foot, which, if it had taken effect, would have killed him. But as to the story of the apparition in fair day-light – the flying from the face of it – the running foul of his brother – pursuing him, and knocking him down, why the judge smiled at the relation; and saying, 'It was a very extraordinary story,' he remanded George to prison, leaving the matter to the High Court of Justiciary.

When the case came before that court, matters took a different turn. The constant and sullen attendance of the one brother upon the other excited suspicions; and these were in some manner, confirmed, when the guards at Queensberry-house deponed, that the prisoner went by them on his way to the hill that morning, about twenty minutes before the complainant, and when the latter passed, he asked if such a young man had passed before him, describing the prisoner's appearance to them; and that, on being answered in the affirmative, he mended his pace and fell a-running.

The Lord Justice, on hearing this, asked the prisoner if he had any suspicions that his brother had a design on his life.

He answered, that all along, from the time of their first unfortunate meeting, his brother had dogged his steps so constantly, and so unaccountably, that he was convinced it was with some intent out of the ordinary course of events; and that if, as his lordship supposed, it was indeed his shadow that he had seen approaching him through the mist, then, from the cowering and cautious manner that it advanced, there was too little doubt that his brother's design had been to push him headlong from the cliff that morning.

A conversation then took place between the Judge and the Lord Advocate; and, in the mean time, a bustle was seen in the hall; on which the doors were ordered to be guarded, – and, behold, the precious Mr R. Wringhim was taken into custody, trying to make his escape out of court. Finally it turned out, that George was honourably acquitted, and young Wringhim bound over to keep the peace, with heavy penalties and securities.

That was a day of high exultation to George and his youthful associates, all of whom abhorred Wringhim; and the evening being spent in great glee, it was agreed between Mr Adam Gordon and George, that their visit to the Highlands, though thus long delayed, was not to be abandoned; and though they had, through the machinations of an incendiary, lost the season of delight, they would still find plenty of sport in deer-shooting. Accordingly, the day was set a second time for their departure; and, on the day preceding that, all the party were invited by George to dine with him once more at the sign of the Black Bull of Norway. Every one promised to attend, anticipating nothing but festivity and joy. Alas, what short-sighted improvident creatures we are, all of us; and how often does the evening cup of joy lead to

sorrow in the morning!

The day arrived – the party of young noblemen and gentlemen met, and were as happy and jovial as men could be. George was never seen so brilliant, or so full of spirits; and exulting to see so many gallant young chiefs and gentlemen about him, who all gloried in the same principles of loyalty, (perhaps this word should have been written *disloyalty*,) he made speeches, gave toasts, and sung songs, all leaning slily to the same side, until a very late hour. By that time he had pushed the bottle so long and so freely, that its fumes had taken possession of every brain to such a degree, that they held Dame Reason rather at the staff's end, overbearing all her counsels and expostulations; and it was imprudently proposed by a wild inebriated spark, and carried by a majority of voices, that the whole party should adjourn to a bagnio for the remainder of the night.

They did so; and it appears from what follows, that the house to which they retired, must have been somewhere on the opposite side of the street to the Black Bull Inn, a little farther to the eastward. They had not been an hour in that house, till some altercation chanced to arise between George Colwan and a Mr Drummond, the younger son of a nobleman of distinction. It was perfectly casual, and no one thenceforward, to this day, could ever tell what it was about, if it was not about the misunderstanding of some word, or term, that the one had uttered. However it was, some high words passed between them; these were followed by threats; and in less than two minutes from the commencement of the quarrel, Drummond left the house in apparent displeasure, hinting to the other that they two should settle that in a more convenient place.

The company looked at one another, for all was over before any of them knew such a thing was begun. 'What the devil is the matter?' cried one. 'What ails Drummond?' cried another. 'Who has he quarrelled with?' asked a third.

'Don't know.' – 'Can't tell, on my life.' – 'He has quarrelled with his wine, I suppose, and is going to send it a challenge.'

Such were the questions, and such the answers that passed in the jovial party, and the matter was no more thought of.

But in the course of a very short space, about the length of which the ideas of the company were the next day at great variance, a sharp rap came to the door: It was opened by a female; but there being a chain inside, she only saw one side of the person at the door. He appeared to be a young gentleman, in appearance like him who had lately left the house, and asked, in a low whispering voice, 'if young Dalcastle was still in the house?' The woman did not know, – 'If he is,' added he, 'pray tell him to speak with me for a few minutes.' The woman delivered the message before all the party, among whom there were then sundry courteous ladies of notable distinction, and George, on receiving it, instantly rose from the side of one of them, and said, in the hearing of them all, 'I will bet a hundred merks that is Drummond.' – 'Don't got to quarrel with him, George,' said one. – 'Bring him in with you,' said another. George stepped out; the door was again bolted, the chain drawn across, and the inadvertent party, left within, thought no more of the circumstance till the next morning, that the report had spread over the city, that a young gentleman had been slain, on a little washing green at the side of the North Loch, and at the very bottom of the close where this thoughtless party had been assembled.

Several of them, on first hearing the report, hasted to the dead-room in the old Guard-house, where the corpse had been deposited, and soon discovered the body to be that of their friend and late entertainer, George Colwan. Great were the consternation and grief of all concerned, and, in particular, of his old father and Miss Logan; for George had always been the sole hope and darling of both, and the news of the event paralysed them so as to render them incapable of all thought or exertion. The spirit of the old laird was broken by the blow, and he descended at once from a jolly, good-natured, and active man, to a mere driveller, weeping over the body of his son, kissing his wound, his lips, and his cold brow alternately; denouncing vengeance on his murderers, and lamenting that he himself had not met the cruel doom, so that the hope of his race might have been preserved. In short, finding that all further motive of action and object of concern or of love, here below, were for ever removed from him, he abandoned himself to despair, and threatened to go down to the grave with his son.

But although he made no attempt to discover the murderers, the arm of justice was not idle; and it being evident to all, that the crime must infallibly be brought home to young Drummond, some of his friends sought him out, and compelled him, sorely against his will, to retire into concealment till the issue of the proof that should be led was made known. At the same time, he denied all knowledge of the incident with a resolution that astonished his intimate friends and relations, who to a man suspected him guilty. His father was not in Scotland, for I think it was said to me that this young man was second son to a John, Duke of Melfort, who lived abroad with the royal family of the Stuarts; but this young gentleman lived with the relations of his mother, one of whom, an uncle, was a Lord of Session: these having

thoroughly effected his concealment, went away, and listened to the evidence; and the examination of every new witness convinced them that their noble young relative was the slayer of his friend.

All the young gentlemen of the party were examined, save Drummond, who, when sent for, could not be found, which circumstance sorely confirmed the suspicions against him in the minds of judges and jurors, friends and enemies; and there is little doubt, that the care of his relations in concealing him, injured his character, and his cause. The young gentlemen, of whom the party was composed, varied considerably, with respect to the quarrel between him and the deceased. Some of them had neither heard nor noted it; others had, but not one of them could tell how it began. Some of them had heard the threat uttered by Drummond on leaving the house, and one only had noted him lay his hand on his sword. Not one of them could swear that it was Drummond who came to the door, and desired to speak with the deceased, but the general impression on the minds of them all, was to that effect; and one of the women swore that she heard the voice distinctly at the door, and every word that voice pronounced; and at the same time heard the deceased say, that it was Drummond's.

On the other hand, there were some evidences on Drummond's part, which Lord Craigie, his uncle, had taken care to collect. He produced the sword which his nephew had worn that night, on which there was neither blood nor blemish; and above all, he insisted on the evidence of a number of surgeons, who declared that both the wounds which the deceased had received, had been given behind. One of these was below the left arm, and a slight one; the other was quite through the body, and both evidently inflicted with the same weapon, a two-edged sword, of the same dimensions as that worn by Drummond.

Upon the whole, there was a division in the court, but a majority decided it. Drummond was pronounced guilty of the murder; outlawed for not appearing, and a high reward offered for his apprehension. It was with the greatest difficulty that he escaped on board of a small trading vessel, which landed him in Holland, and from thence, flying into Germany, he entered into the service of the Emperor Charles VI. Many regretted that he was not taken, and made to suffer the penalty due for such a crime, and the melancholy incident became a pulpit theme over a great part of Scotland, being held up as a proper warning to youth to beware of such haunts of vice and depravity, the nurses of all that is precipitate, immoral, and base, among mankind.

After the funeral of this promising and excellent young man, his father never more held up his head. Miss Logan, with all her art, could not get him to attend to any worldly thing, or to make any settlement whatsoever of his affairs, save making her over a present of what disposable funds he had about him. As to his estates, when they were mentioned to him, he wished them all in the bottom of the sea, and himself along with them. But whenever she mentioned the circumstance of Thomas Drummond having been the murderer of his son, he shook his head, and once made the remark, that 'It was all a mistake, a gross and fatal error; but that God, who had permitted such a flagrant deed, would bring it to light in his own time and way.' In a few weeks he followed his son to the grave, and the notorious Robert Wringhim took possession of his estates as the lawful son of the late laird, born in wedlock, and under his father's roof. The investiture was celebrated by prayer, singing of psalms, and religious disputation. The late guardian and adopted father, and the mother of the new laird, presided on the grand occasion, making a conspicuous figure in all the work of the day; and though the youth himself indulged rather more freely in the bottle, than he had ever been seen to do before, it was agreed by all present, that there had never been a festivity so sanctified within the great hall of Dalcastle. Then, after due thanks returned, they parted rejoicing in spirit; which thanks, by the by, consisted wholly in telling the Almighty what he was; and informing him, with very particular precision, what *they* were who addressed him; for Wringhim's whole system of popular declamation consisted it seems in this, – to denounce all men and women to destruction, and then hold out hopes to his adherents that they were the chosen few, included in the promises, and who could never fall away. It would appear that this pharisaical doctrine is a very delicious one, and the most grateful of all others to the worst characters.

But the ways of heaven are altogether inscrutable, and soar as far above and beyond the works and the comprehensions of man, as the sun, flaming in majesty, is above the tiny boy's evening rocket. It is the controller of Nature alone, that can bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. Who is he that causeth the mole, from his secret path of darkness, to throw up the gem, the gold, and the precious ore? The same, that from the mouths of babes and sucklings can extract the perfection of praise, and who can make the most abject of his creatures instrumental in bringing the most hidden truths to light.

Miss Logan had never lost the thought of her late master's prediction, that Heaven would bring to light the truth concerning the untimely death of his son. She perceived that some strange conviction, too horrible for expression, preyed on his mind from the moment that the fatal news reached him, to the last of his existence; and in his last ravings, he uttered some incoherent words about justification by faith alone, and absolute and eternal predestination having been the ruin of his house. These, to be sure, were

the words of super-annuation, and of the last and severest kind of it; but for all that, they sunk deep into Miss Logan's soul, and at last she began to think with herself, 'Is it possible the Wringhims, and the sophisticating wretch who is in conjunction with them, the mother of my late beautiful and amiable young master, can have effected his destruction? If so, I will spend my days, and my little patrimony, in endeavours to rake up and expose the unnatural deed.'

In all her outgoings and incomings, Mrs Logan (as she was now styled) never lost sight of this one object. Every new disappointment only whetted her desire to fish up some particulars concerning it; for she thought so long, and so ardently upon it, that by degrees it became settled in her mind as a sealed truth. And as woman is always most jealous of her own sex in such matters, her suspicions were fixed on her greatest enemy, Mrs Colwan, now the Lady Dowager of Dalcastle. All was wrapt in a chaos of confusion and darkness; but at last by dint of a thousand sly and secret inquiries, Mrs Logan found out where Lady Dalcastle had been, on the night that the murder happened, and likewise what company she had kept, as well as some of the comers and goers; and she had hopes of having discovered a cue, which, if she could keep hold of the thread, would lead her through darkness to the light of truth.

Returning very late one evening from a convocation of family servants, which she had drawn together in order to fish something out of them, her maid having been in attendance on her all the evening, they found on going home, that the house had been broken, and a number of valuable articles stolen therefrom. Mrs Logan had grown quite heartless before this stroke, having been altogether unsuccessful in her inquiries, and now she began to entertain some resolutions of giving up the fruitless search.

In a few days thereafter, she received intelligence that her clothes and plate were mostly recovered, and that she for one was bound over to prosecute the depredator, provided the articles turned out to be hers, as libelled in the indictment, and as a king's evidence had given out. She was likewise summoned, or requested, I know not which, being ignorant of these matters, to go as far as the town of Peebles on Tweedside, in order to survey these articles on such a day, and make affidavit to their identity before the Sheriff. She went accordingly; but on entering the town by the North Gate, she was accosted by a poor girl in tattered apparel, who with great earnestness inquired if her name was not Mrs Logan? On being answered in the affirmative, she said that the unfortunate prisoner in the tolbooth requested her, as she valued all that was dear to her in life, to go and see her before she appeared in court, at the hour of cause, as she (the prisoner) had something of the greatest moment to impart to her. Mrs Logan's curiosity was excited, and she followed the girl straight to the tolbooth, who by the way said to her, that she would find in the prisoner a woman of a superior mind, who had gone through all the vicissitudes of life. 'She has been very unfortunate, and I fear very wicked,' added the poor thing, 'but she is my mother, and God knows, with all her faults and failings, she has never been unkind to me. You, madam, have it in your power to save her; but she has wronged you, and therefore if you will not do it for her sake, do it for mine, and the God of the fatherless will reward you.'

Mrs Logan answered her with a cast of the head, and a hem! and only remarked, that 'the guilty must not always be suffered to escape, or what a world must we be doomed to live in!'

She was admitted to the prison, and found a tall emaciated figure, who appeared to have once possessed a sort of masculine beauty in no ordinary degree, but was now considerably advanced in years. She viewed Mrs Logan with a stern, steady gaze, as if reading her features as a margin to her intellect; and when she addressed her it was not with that humility, and agonized fervor, which are natural for one in such circumstances to address to another, who has the power of her life and death in her hands.

'I am deeply indebted to you, for this timely visit, Mrs Logan,' said she. 'It is not that I value life, or because I fear death, that I have sent for you so expressly. But the manner of the death that awaits me, has something peculiarly revolting in it to a female mind. Good God! when I think of being hung up, a spectacle to a gazing, gaping multitude, with numbers of which I have had intimacies and connections, that would render the moment of parting so hideous, that, believe me, it rends to flinders a soul born for another sphere than that in which it has moved, had not the vile selfishness of a lordly fiend ruined all my prospects, and all my hopes. Hear me then; for I do not ask your pity: I only ask of you to look to yourself, and behave with womanly prudence. If you deny this day, that these goods are yours, there is no other evidence whatever against my life, and it is safe for the present. For as for the word of the wretch who has betrayed me, it is of no avail; he has prevaricated so notoriously to save himself. If you deny them, you shall have them all again to the value of a mite, and more to the bargain. If you swear to the identity of them, the process will, one way and another, cost you the half of what they are worth.'

'And what security have I for that?' said Mrs Logan.

'You have none but *my word*,' said the other proudly, 'and that never yet was violated. If you cannot take that, I know the worst you can do – But I had forgot – I have a poor helpless child without, waiting, and starving about the prison door – Surely it was of her that I wished to speak. This shameful death of

mine will leave her in a deplorable state.'

'The girl seems to have candour and strong affections,' said Mrs Logan; 'I grievously mistake if such a child would not be a thousand times better without such a guardian and director.'

'Then will you be so kind as come to the Grass Market, and see me put down?' said the prisoner. 'I thought a woman would estimate a woman's and a mother's feelings, when such a dreadful throw was at stake, at least in part. But you are callous, and have never known any feelings but those of subordination to your old unnatural master. Alas, I have no cause of offence! I have wronged you; and justice must take its course. Will you forgive me before we part?'

Mrs Logan hesitated, for her mind ran on something else: On which the other subjoined, 'No, you will not forgive me, I see. But you will pray to God to forgive me? I know you will *do that*.'

Mrs Logan heard not this jeer, but looking at the prisoner with an absent and stupid stare, she said, 'Did you know my late master?'

'Ay, that I did, and never for any good,' said she. 'I knew the old and the young spark both, and was by when the latter was slain.'

This careless sentence affected Mrs Logan in a most peculiar manner. A shower of tears burst from her eyes ere it was done, and when it was, she appeared like one bereaved of her mind. She first turned one way and then another, as if looking for something she had dropped. She seemed to think she had lost her eyes, instead of her tears, and at length, as by instinct, she tottered close up to the prisoner's face, and looking wistfully and joyfully in it, said, with breathless earnestness, 'Pray, mistress, what is your name?'

'My name is Arabella Calvert,' said the other: 'Miss, mistress, or widow, as you chuse, for I have been all the three, and that not once nor twice only – Ay, and something beyond all these. But as for you, you have never been any thing!'

'Ay, ay! and so you are Bell Calvert? Well, I thought so – I thought so,' said Mrs Logan; and helping herself to a seat, she came and sat down close by the prisoner's knee. 'So you are indeed Bell Calvert, so called once. Well, of all the world you are the woman whom I have longed and travailed the most to see. But you were invisible; a being to be heard of, not seen.'

'There have been days, madam,' returned she, 'when I *was* to be seen, and when there were few to be seen like me. But since that time there have indeed been days on which I was not to be seen. My crimes have been great, but my sufferings have been greater. So great, that neither you nor the world can ever either know or conceive them. I hope they will be taken into account by the Most High. Mine have been crimes of utter desperation. But whom am I speaking to? You had better leave me to myself, mistress.'

'Leave you to yourself? That I will be loth to do, till you tell me where you were that night my young master was murdered?'

'Where the devil would, I was! Will that suffice you? Ah, it was a vile action! A night to be remembered that was! Won't you be going? I want to trust my daughter with a commission.'

'No, Mrs Calvert, you and I part not, till you have divulged that mystery to me.'

'You must accompany me to the other world, then, for you shall not have it in this.'

'If you refuse to answer me, I can have you before a tribunal, where you shall be sifted to the soul.'

'Such miserable inanity! What care I for your threatenings of a tribunal? I who must so soon stand before my last earthly one? What could the word of such a culprit avail? Or if it could, where is the judge that could enforce it?'

'Did you not say that there was some mode of accommodating matters on that score?'

'Yes, I prayed you to grant me my life, which is in your power. The saving of it would not have cost you a plack, yet you refused to do it. The taking of it will cost you a great deal, and yet to that purpose you adhere. I can have no parley with such a spirit. I would not have my life in a present from its motions, nor would I exchange courtesies with its possessor.'

'Indeed, Mrs Calvert, since ever we met, I have been so busy thinking about who you might be, that I know not what you have been proposing. I believe, I meant to do what I could to save you. But once for all, tell me every thing that you know concerning that amiable young gentleman's death, and here is my hand there shall be nothing wanting that I can effect for you.'

'No, I despise all barter with such mean and selfish curiosity; and, as I believe *that* passion is stronger with you, than fear is with me, we part on equal terms. Do your worst; and my secret shall go to the gallows and the grave with me.'

Mrs Logan was now greatly confounded, and after proffering in vain to concede every thing she could ask in exchange, for the particulars relating to the murder, she became the suppliant in her turn. But the unaccountable culprit, exulting in her advantage, laughed her to scorn; and finally, in a paroxysm of pride and impatience, called in the jailor and had her expelled, ordering him in her hearing not to grant her admittance a second time, on any pretence.

Mrs Logan was now hard put to it, and again driven almost to despair. She might have succeeded in the attainment of that she thirsted for most in life so easily, had she known the character with which she had to deal – Had she known to have soothed her high and afflicted spirit: but that opportunity was past, and the hour of examination at hand. She once thought of going and claiming her articles, as she at first intended; but then, when she thought again of the Wringhims swaying it at Dalcastle, where she had been wont to hear them held in such contempt, if not abhorrence, and perhaps of holding it by the most diabolical means, she was withheld from marring the only chance that remained of having a glimpse into that mysterious affair.

Finally, she resolved not to answer to her name in the court, rather than to appear and assert a falsehood, which she might be called on to certify by oath. She did so; and heard the Sheriff give orders to the officers to make inquiry for Miss Logan from Edinburgh, at the various places of entertainment in town, and to expedite her arrival in court, as things of great value were in dependence. She also heard the man who had turned king's evidence against the prisoner, examined for the second time, and sifted most cunningly. His answers gave any thing but satisfaction to the Sheriff, though Mrs Logan believed them to be mainly truth. But there were a few questions and answers that struck her above all others.

'How long is it since Mrs Calvert and you became acquainted?'

'About a year and a half.'

'State the precise time, if you please; the day, or night, according to your remembrance.'

'It was on the morning of the 28th of February, 1705.'

'What time of the morning?'

'Perhaps about one.'

'So early as that? At what place did you meet then?'

'It was at the foot of one of the north wynds of Edinburgh.'

'Was it by appointment that you met?'

'No, it was not.'

'For what purpose was it then?'

'For no purpose.'

'How is it that you chance to remember the day and hour so minutely, if you met that woman, whom you have accused, merely by chance, and for no manner of purpose, as you must have met others that night, perhaps to the amount of hundreds, in the same way?'

'I have good cause to remember it, my lord.'

'What was the cause? – No answer? – You don't choose to say what that cause was?'

'I am not at liberty to tell.'

The Sheriff then descended to other particulars, all of which tended to prove that the fellow was an accomplished villain, and that the principal share of the atrocities had been committed by him. Indeed the Sheriff hinted, that he suspected the only share Mrs Calvert had in them, was in being too much in his company, and too true to him. The case was remitted to the Court of Justiciary; but Mrs Logan had heard enough to convince her that the culprits first met at the very spot, and the very hour, on which George Colwan was slain; and she had no doubt that they were incendiaries set on by his mother, to forward her own and her darling son's way to opulence. Mrs Logan was wrong, as will appear in the sequel; but her antipathy to Mrs Colwan made her watch the event with all care. She never quitted Peebles as long as Bell Calvert remained there, and when she was removed to Edinburgh, the other followed. When the trial came on, Mrs Logan and her maid were again summoned as witnesses before the jury, and compelled by the prosecutor for the Crown to appear.

The maid was first called; and when she came into the witnesses' box, the anxious and hopeless looks of the prisoner were manifest to all: But the girl, whose name, she said, was Bessy Gillies, answered in so flippant and fearless a way, that the auditors were much amused. After a number of routine questions, the depute-advocate asked her if she was at home on the morning of the fifth of September last, when her mistress's house was robbed?

'Was I at hame, say ye? Na, faith-ye, lad! An I had been at hame, there had been mair to dee. I wad hae raised sic a yelloch!'

'Where were you that morning?'

'Where was I, say you? I was in the house where my mistress was, sitting dozing an' half sleeping in the kitchen. I thought aye she would be setting out every minute, for twa hours.'

'And when you went home, what did you find?'

'What found we? Be my sooth, we found a broken lock, an' toom kists.'

'Relate some of the particulars, if you please.'

'O, sir, the thieves didna stand upon particulars: they were halesale dealers in a' our best wares.'

‘I mean, what passed between your mistress and you on the occasion?’

‘What passed, say ye? O, there wasna muckle: I was in a great passion, but she was dung doitrified a wee. When she gaed to put the key i’ the door, up it flew to the fer wa’. – “Bess, ye jaud, what’s the meaning o’this?” quo she. “Ye hae left the door open, ye tawpie!” quo she. “The ne’er o’ that I did,” quo I, “or may my shakel bane never turn another key.” When we got the candle lightit, a’ the house was in a hoad-road. “Bessy, my woman,” quo she, “we are baith ruined and undone creatures.” “The deil a bit,” quo I; “that I deny positively. H’mh! to speak o’ a lass o’ my age being ruined and undone! I never had muckle except what was within a good jerkin, an’ let the thief ruin me there wha can.”’

‘Do you remember ought else that your mistress said on the occasion? Did you hear her blame any person?’

‘O, she made a great deal o’ grumphing an’ groaning about the *misfortune*, as she ca’d it, an’ I think she said it was a part o’ the ruin wrought by the Ringans, or some sic name, – “they’ll hae’t a’! they’ll hae’t a’!” cried she, wringing her hands; “they’ll hae’t a’, an’ hell wi’t, an’ they’ll get them baith.” “Aweel, that’s aye some satisfaction,” quo I.’

‘Whom did she mean by the Ringans, do you know?’

‘I fancy they are some creatures that she has dreamed about, for I think there canna be as ill folks living as she ca’s them.’

‘Did you never hear her say that the prisoner at the bar there, Mrs Calvert, or Bell Calvert, was the robber of her house; or that she was one of the Ringans?’

‘Never. Somebody tauld her lately, that ane Bell Calvert robbed her house, but she disna believe it. Neither do I.’

‘What reasons have you for doubting it?’

‘Because it was nae woman’s fingers that broke up the bolts an’ the locks that were torn open that night.’

‘Very pertinent, Bessy. Come then within the bar, and look at these articles on the table. Did you ever see these silver spoons before?’

‘I hae seen some very like them, and whaever has seen siller spoons, has done the same.’

‘Can you swear you never saw them before?’

‘Na, na, I wadna swear to ony siller spoons that ever war made, unless I had put a private mark on them wi’ my ain hand, an’ that’s what I never did to ane.’

‘See, they are all marked with a C.’

‘Sae are a’ the spoons in Argyle, an’ the half o’ them in Edinburgh I think. A C is a very common letter, an’ so are a’ the names that begin wi’t. Lay them by, lay them by, an’ gie the poor woman her spoons again. They are marked wi’ her ain name, an’ I hae little doubt they are hers, an’ that she has seen better days.’

‘Ah, God bless her heart!’ sighed the prisoner; and that blessing was echoed in the breathings of many a feeling breast.

‘Did you ever see this gown before, think you?’

‘I hae seen ane very like it.’

‘Could you not swear that gown was your mistress’s once?’

‘No, unless I saw her hae’t on, an’ kend that she had paid for’t. I am very scrupulous about an oath. *Like* is an ill mark. Sae ill indeed, that I wad hardly swear to ony thing.’

‘But you say that gown is *very like* one your mistress used to wear.

‘I never said sic a thing. It is like one I hae seen her hae out airing on the hay raip i’ the back green. It is very like ane I hae seen Mrs Butler in the Grass Market wearing too; I rather think it is the same. Bless you, sir, I wadna swear to my ain fore finger, if it had been as lang out o’ my sight, an’ brought in an’ laid on that table.’

‘Perhaps you are not aware, girl, that this scrupulousness of yours is likely to thwart the purposes of justice, and bereave your mistress of property to the amount of a thousand merks?’ (*From the Judge*.)

‘I canna help that, my lord: that’s her lookout. For my part, I am resolved to keep a clear conscience, till I be married, at any rate.’

‘Look over these things and see if there is any one article among them which you can fix on as the property of your mistress.’

‘No ane o’them, sir, no ane o’them. An oath is an awfu’ thing, especially when it is for life or death. Gie the poor woman her things again, an’ let my mistress pick up the next she finds: that’s my advice.’

When Mrs Logan came into the box, the prisoner groaned, and laid down her head. But how she was astonished when she heard her deliver herself something to the following purport! – That whatever penalties she was doomed to abide, she was determined she would not bear witness against a woman’s

life, from a certain conviction that it could not be a woman who broke her house. ‘I have no doubt that I may find some of my own things there,’ added she, ‘but if they were found in her possession, she has been made a tool, or the dupe, of an infernal set, who shall be nameless here. I believe she *did not* rob me, and for that reason I will have no hand in her condemnation.’

The Judge. ‘This is the most singular perversion I have ever witnessed. Mrs Logan, I entertain strong suspicions that the prisoner, or her agents, have made some agreement with you on this matter, to prevent the course of justice.’

‘So far from that, my lord, I went into the jail at Peebles to this woman, whom I had never seen before, and proffered to withdraw my part in the prosecution, as well as my evidence, provided she would tell me a few simple facts; but she spurned at my offer, and had me turned insolently out of the prison, with orders to the jailor never to admit me again on any pretence.’

The prisoner’s counsel, taking hold of this evidence, addressed the jury with great fluency; and finally, the prosecution was withdrawn, and the prisoner dismissed from the bar, with a severe reprimand for her past conduct, and an exhortation to keep better company.

It was not many days till a caddy came with a large parcel to Mrs Logan’s house, which parcel he delivered into her hands, accompanied with a sealed note, containing an inventory of the articles, and a request to know if the unfortunate Arabella Calvert would be admitted to converse with Mrs Logan.

Never was there a woman so much overjoyed as Mrs Logan was at this message. She returned compliments: Would be most happy to see her; and no article of the parcel should be looked at, or touched, till her arrival. – It was not long till she made her appearance, dressed in somewhat better style than she had yet seen her; delivered her over the greater part of the stolen property, besides many things that either never had belonged to Mrs Logan, or that she thought proper to deny, in order that the other might retain them.

The tale that she told of her misfortunes was of the most distressing nature, and was enough to stir up all the tender, as well as abhorrent feelings in the bosom of humanity. She had suffered every deprivation in fame, fortune, and person. She had been imprisoned; she had been scourged, and branded as an impostor; and all on account of her resolute and unmoving fidelity and truth to *several* of the very worst of men, every one of whom had abandoned her to utter destitution and shame. But this story we cannot enter on at present, as it would perhaps mar the thread of our story, as much as it did the anxious anticipations of Mrs Logan, who sat pining and longing for the relation that follows.

‘Now I know, Mrs Logan, that you are expecting a detail of the circumstances relating to the death of Mr George Colwan; and in gratitude for your unbounded generosity, and disinterestedness, I will tell you all that I know, although, for causes that will appear obvious to you, I had determined never in life to divulge one circumstance of it. I can tell you, however, that you will be disappointed, for it was not the gentleman who was accused, found guilty, and would have suffered the utmost penalty of the law, had he not made his escape. *It was not he*, I say, who slew your young master, nor had he any hand in it.’

‘I never thought he had. But, pray, how do you come to know this?’

‘You shall hear. I had been abandoned in York, by an artful and consummate fiend; found guilty of being art and part concerned in the most heinous atrocities, and, in his place, suffered what I yet shudder to think of. I was banished the county – begged my way with my poor outcast child up to Edinburgh, and was there obliged, for the second time in my life, to betake myself to the most degrading of all means to support two wretched lives. I hired a dress, and betook me, shivering, to the High Street, too well aware that my form and appearance would soon draw me suitors enow at that throng and intemperate time of the parliament. On my very first stepping out to the street, a party of young gentlemen was passing. I heard by the noise they made, and the tenor of their speech, that they were more than mellow, and so I resolved to keep near them, in order, if possible, to make some of them my prey. But just as one of them began to eye me, I was rudely thrust into a narrow close by one of the guardsmen. I had heard to what house the party was bound, for the men were talking exceedingly loud, and making no secret of it: so I hasted down the close, and round below to the one where their rendezvous was to be; but I was too late, they were all housed and the door bolted. I resolved to wait, thinking they could not all stay long; but I was perishing with famine, and was like to fall down. The moon shone as bright as day, and I perceived, by a sign at the bottom of the close, that there was a small tavern of a certain description up two stairs there. I went up and called, telling the mistress of the house my plan. She approved of it mainly, and offered me her best apartment, provided I could get one of these noble mates to accompany me. She abused Lucky Sudds, as she called her, at the inn where the party was, envying her huge profits, no doubt, and giving me afterward something to drink, for which I really felt exceedingly grateful in my need. I stepped down stairs in order to be on the alert. The moment that I reached the ground, the door of Lucky Sudds’ house opened and shut, and down came the Honourable Thomas Drummond, with hasty

and impassioned strides, his sword rattling at his heel. I accosted him in a soft and soothing tone. He was taken with my address; for he instantly stood still and gazed intently at me, then at the place, and then at me again. I beckoned him to follow me, which he did without farther ceremony, and we soon found ourselves together in the best room of a house where every thing was wretched. He still looked about him, and at me; but all this while he had never spoken a word. At length, I asked if he would take any refreshment? “If you please,” said he. I asked what he would have? but he only answered, “Whatever you choose, madam.” If he was taken with my address, I was much more taken with his; for he was a complete gentleman, and a gentleman will ever act as one. At length, he began as follows:

‘“I am utterly at a loss to account for this adventure, madam. It seems to me like enchantment, and I can hardly believe my senses. An English lady, I judge, and one, who from her manner and address should belong to the first class of society, in such a place as this, is indeed matter of wonder to me. At the foot of a close in Edinburgh! and at this time of the night! Surely it must have been no common reverse of fortune that reduced you to this?” I wept, or pretended to do so; on which he added. “Pray, madam, take heart. Tell me what has befallen you; and if I can do anything for you, in restoring you to your country or your friends, you shall command my interest.”

‘I had great need of a friend then, and I thought now was the time to secure one. So I began and told him the moving tale I have told you. But I soon perceived that I had kept by the naked truth too unvarnishedly, and thereby quite overshot my mark. When he learned that he was sitting in a wretched corner of an irregular house, with a felon, who had so lately been scourged, and banished as a swindler and impostor, his modest nature took the alarm, and he was shocked, instead of being moved with pity. His eye fixed on some of the casual stripes on my arm, and from that moment he became restless and impatient to be gone. I tried some gentle arts to retain him, but in vain; so, after paying both the landlady and me for pleasures he had neither tasted nor asked, he took his leave.

‘I showed him down stairs; and just as he turned the corner of the next land, a man came rushing violently by him; exchanged looks with him, and came running up to me. He appeared in great agitation, and was quite out of breath; and, taking my hand in his, we ran up stairs together without speaking, and were instantly in the apartment I had left, where a stoup of wine still stood untasted. “Ah, this is fortunate!” said my new spark, and helped himself. In the mean while, as our apartment was a corner one, and looked both east and north, I ran to the easter casement to look after Drummond. Now, note me well: I saw him going eastward in his tartans and bonnet, and the gilded hilt of his claymore glittering in the moon; and, at the very same time, I saw two men, the one in black, and the other likewise in tartans, coming toward the steps from the opposite bank, by the foot of the loch; and I saw Drummond and they eying each other as they passed. I kept view of *him* till he vanished towards Leith Wynd, and by that time the two strangers had come close up under our window. This is what I wish you to pay particular attention to. I had only lost sight of Drummond, (who had given me his name and address,) for the short space of time that we took in running up one pair of short stairs; and during that space he had halted a moment, for, when I got my eye on him again, he had not crossed the mouth of the next entry, nor proceeded above ten or twelve paces, and, *at the same time*, I saw the two men coming down the bank on the opposite side of the loch, at about three hundred paces distance. Both he and they were distinctly in my view, and never within speech of each other, until he vanished into one of the wynds leading toward the bottom of the High Street, at which precise time the two strangers came below my window; so that it was quite clear he neither could be one of them, nor have any communication with them.

‘Yet, mark me again; for of all things I have ever seen, this was the most singular. When I looked down at the two strangers, *one of them was extremely like Drummond*. So like was he, that there was not one item in dress, form, feature, nor voice, by which I could distinguish the one from the other. I was certain it was not he, because I had seen the one going and the other approaching at the same time, and my impression at the moment was, that I looked upon some spirit, or demon, in his likeness. I felt a chillness creep all round my heart, my knees tottered, and, withdrawing my head from the open casement that lay in the dark shade, I said to the man who was with me, “Good God, what is this!”

‘“What is it, my dear?’ said he, as much alarmed as I was.

‘“As I live, there stands an apparition!” said I.

‘He was not so much afraid when he heard me say so, and peeping cautiously out, he looked and listened a-while, and then drawing back, he said in a whisper, “They are both living men, and one of them is he I passed at the corner.”

‘“That he is not,” said I, emphatically. “To that I will make oath.”

‘He smiled and shook his head, and then added, “I never then saw a man before, whom I could not know again, particularly if he was the very last I had seen. But what matters it whether it be or not? As it is no concern of ours, let us sit down and enjoy ourselves.”

‘“But it *does* matter a very great deal with me, sir,” said I. – ‘Bless me, my head is giddy – my breath quite gone, and I feel as if I were surrounded with fiends. Who are you, sir?”

‘“You shall know that ere we two part, my love,” said he: “I cannot conceive why the return of this young gentleman to the spot he so lately left, should discompose you? I suppose he got a glance of you as he passed, and has returned to look after you, and that is the whole secret of the matter.”

‘“If you will be so civil as to walk out and join him then, it will oblige me hugely,” said I, “for I never in my life experienced such boding apprehensions of evil company. I cannot conceive how you should come up here without asking my permission? Will it please you to begone, sir?” – I was within an ace of prevailing. He took out his purse – I need not say more – I was bribed to let him remain. Ah, had I kept by my frail resolution of dismissing him at that moment, what a world of shame and misery had been evited! But that, though uppermost still in my mind, has nothing ado here.

‘When I peeped over again, the two men were disputing in a whisper, the one of them in violent agitation and terror, and the other upbraiding him, and urging him on to some desperate act. At length I heard the young man in the Highland garb say indignantly, “Hush, recreant! It is God’s work which you are commissioned to execute, and it must be done. But if you positively decline it, I will do it myself, and do you beware of the consequences.”

‘“Oh, I will, I will!” cried the other in black clothes, in a wretched beseeching tone. “You shall instruct me in this, as in all things else.”

‘I thought all this while I was closely concealed from them, and wondered not a little when he in tartans gave me a sly nod, as much as to say, “What do you think of this?” or, “Take note of what you see,” or something to that effect, from which I perceived, that whatever he was about, he did not wish it to be kept a secret. For all that, I was impressed with a terror and anxiety that I could not overcome, but it only made me mark every event with the more intense curiosity. The Highlander, whom I still could not help regarding as the evil genius of Thomas Drummond, performed every action, as with the quickness of thought. He concealed the youth in black in a narrow entry, a little to the westward of my windows, and as he was leading him across the moonlight green by the shoulder, I perceived, for the first time, that both of them were armed with rapiers. He pushed him without resistance into the dark shaded close, made another signal to me, and hasted up the close to Lucky Sudds’ door. The city and the morning were so still, that I heard every word that was uttered, on putting my head out a little. He knocked at the door sharply, and after waiting a considerable space, the bolt was drawn, and the door, as I conceived, edged up as far as the massy chain would let it. “Is young Dalcastle still in the house?” said he sharply.

‘I did not hear the answer, but I heard him say, shortly after, “If he is, pray tell him to speak with me for a few minutes.” He then withdrew from the door, and came slowly down the close, in a lingering manner, looking oft behind him. Dalcastle came out; advanced a few steps after him, and then stood still, as if hesitating whether or not he should call out a friend to accompany him; and that instant the door behind him was closed, chained, and the iron bolt drawn; on hearing of which, he followed his adversary without farther hesitation. As he passed below my window, I heard him say, “I beseech you, Tom, let us do nothing in this matter rashly;” but I could not hear the answer of the other, who had turned the corner.

‘I roused up my drowsy companion, who was leaning on the bed, and we both looked together from the north window. We were in the shade, but the moon shone full on the two young gentlemen. Young Dalcastle was visibly the worse of liquor, and his back being turned toward us, he said something to the other which I could not make out, although he spoke a considerable time, and, from his tones and gestures, appeared to be reasoning. When he had done, the tall young man in the tartans drew his sword, and his face being straight to us, we heard him say distinctly, “No more words about it, George, if you please; but if you be a man, as I take you to be, draw your sword, and let us settle it here.”

‘Dalcastle drew his sword, without changing his attitude; but he spoke with more warmth, for we heard his words, “Think you that I fear you, Tom? Be assured, sir, I would not fear ten of the best of your name, at each other’s backs: all that I want is to have friends with us to see fair play, for if you close with me, you are a dead man.”

‘The other stormed at these words. “You are a braggart, sir,” cried he, “a wretch – a blot on the cheek of nature – a blight on the Christian world – a reprobate – I’ll have your soul, sir – You must play at tennis, and put down elect brethren in another world to-morrow.’ As he said this, he brandished his rapier, exciting Dalcastle to offence. He gained his point: The latter, who had previously drawn, advanced in upon his vapouring and licentious antagonist, and a fierce combat ensued. My companion was delighted beyond measure, and I could not keep him from exclaiming, loud enough to have been heard, “that’s grand! that’s excellent!” For me, my heart quaked like an aspen. Young Dalcastle either had a decided advantage over his adversary, or else the other thought proper to let him have it; for he shifted,

and wore, and flitted from Dalcastle's thrusts like a shadow, uttering ofttimes a sarcastic laugh, that seemed to provoke the other beyond all bearing. At one time, he would spring away to a great distance, then advance again on young Dalcastle with the swiftness of lightning. But that young hero always stood his ground, and repelled the attack: he never gave way, although they fought nearly twice round the bleaching green, which you know is not a very small one. At length they fought close up to the mouth of the dark entry, where the fellow in black stood all this while concealed, and then the combatant in tartans closed with his antagonist, or pretended to do so; but the moment they began to grapple, he wheeled about, turning Colwan's back towards the entry, and then cried out, 'Ah, hell has it! My friend, my friend!'

'That moment the fellow in black rushed from his cover with his drawn rapier, and gave the brave young Dalcastle two deadly wounds in the back, as quick as arm could thrust, both of which I thought pierced through his body. He fell, and rolling himself on his back, he perceived who it was that had slain him thus foully, and said, with a dying emphasis, which I never heard equalled, "Oh, dog of hell, is it you who has done this!"

'He articulated some more, which I could not hear for other sounds; for the moment that the man in black inflicted the deadly wound, my companion called out, "That's unfair, you rip! That's damnable! to strike a brave fellow behind! One at a time, you cowards! &c." to all which the unnatural fiend in the tartans answered with a loud exulting laugh; and then, taking the poor paralysed murderer by the bow of the arm, he hurried him into the dark entry once more, where I lost sight of them for ever.'

Before this time, Mrs Logan had risen up; and when the narrator had finished, she was standing with her arms stretched upward at their full length, and her visage turned down, on which were pourtrayed the lines of the most absolute horror. 'The dark suspicions of my late benefactor have been just, and his last prediction is fulfilled,' cried she. 'The murderer of the accomplished George Colwan has been his own brother, set on, there is little doubt, by her who bare them both, and her directing angel, the self-justified bigot. Aye, and yonder they sit, enjoying the luxuries so dearly purchased, with perfect impunity! If the Almighty do not hurl them down, blasted with shame and confusion, there is no hope of retribution in this life. And, by his might, I will be the agent to accomplish it! Why did the man not pursue the foul murderers? Why did he not raise the alarm, and call the watch?'

'He? The wretch! He durst not move from the shelter he had obtained, – no, not for the soul of him. He was pursued for his life, at the moment when he first flew into my arms. But I did not know it; no, I did not *then* know him. May the curse of heaven, and the blight of hell, settle on the detestable wretch! He pursue for the sake of justice! No; his efforts have all been for evil, but never for good. But *I* raised the alarm; miserable and degraded as I was, I pursued and raised the watch myself. Have you not heard the name of Bell Calvert coupled with that hideous and mysterious affair?'

'Yes, I have. In secret often I have heard it. But how came it that you could never be found? How came it that you never appeared in defence of the Honourable Thomas Drummond; you, the only person who could have justified him?'

'I could not, for I then fell under the power and guidance of a wretch, who durst not for the soul of him be brought forward in the affair. And what was worse, his evidence would have overborne mine, for he would have sworn, that the man who called out and fought Colwan, was the same he met leaving my apartment, and there was an end of it. And moreover, it is well known, that this same man, – this wretch of whom I speak, never mistook one man for another in his life, which makes the mystery of the likeness between this incendiary and Drummond the more extraordinary.'

'If it was Drummond, after all that you have asserted, then are my surmises still wrong.'

'There is nothing of which I can be more certain, than that it was not Drummond. We have nothing on earth but our senses to depend upon: if these deceive us, what are we to do. I own I cannot account for it; nor ever shall be able to account for it as long as I live.'

'Could you know the man in black, if you saw him again?'

'I think I could, if I saw him walk or run: his gait was very particular: He walked as if he had been flat-soled, and his legs made of steel, without any joints in his feet or ancles.'

'The very same! The very same! The very same! Pray will you take a few days' journey into the country with me, to look at such a man?'

'You have preserved my life, and for you I will do any thing. I will accompany you with pleasure: and I think I can say that I will know him, for his form left an impression on my heart not soon to be effaced. But of this I am sure, that my unworthy companion *will* recognize him, and that he will be able to swear to his identity every day as long as he lives.'

'Where is he? Where is he? O! Mrs Calvert, where is he?'

'Where is he? He is the wretch whom you heard giving me up to the death; who, after experiencing

every mark of affection that a poor ruined being could confer, and after committing a thousand atrocities of which she was ignorant, became an informer to save his diabolical life, and attempted to offer up mine as a sacrifice for all. We will go by ourselves first, and I will tell you if it is necessary to send any farther.'

The two dames, the very next morning, dressed themselves like country goodwives; and, hiring two stout ponies furnished with pillions, they took their journey westward, and the second evening after leaving Edinburgh they arrived at the village about two miles below Dalcastle, where they alighted. But Mrs Logan, being anxious to have Mrs Calvert's judgment, without either hint or preparation, took care not to mention that they were so near to the end of their journey. In conformity with this plan, she said, after they had sat a while, 'Heigh-ho, but I am weary! What suppose we should rest a day here before we proceed farther on our journey?'

Mrs Calvert was leaning on the casement, and looking out when her companion addressed these words to her, and by far too much engaged to return any answer, for her eyes were riveted on two young men who approached from the farther end of the village; and at length, turning round her head, she said, with the most intense interest, 'Proceed farther on our journey, did you say? That we need not do; for, as I live, here comes the very man!'

Mrs Logan ran to the window, and behold, there was indeed Robert Wringhim Colwan (now the Laird of Dalcastle) coming forward almost below their window, walking arm in arm with another young man; and as the two passed, the latter looked up and made a sly signal to the two dames, biting his lip, winking with his left eye, and nodding his head. Mrs Calvert was astonished at this recognizance, the young man's former companion having made exactly such another signal on the night of the duel, by the light of the moon; and it struck her, moreover, that she had somewhere seen this young man's face before. She looked after him, and he winked over his shoulder to her; but she was prevented from returning his salute by her companion, who uttered a loud cry, between a groan and shriek, and fell down on the floor with a rumble like a wall that had suddenly been undermined. She had fainted quite away, and required all her companion's attention during the remainder of the evening, for she had scarcely ever well recovered out of one fit before she fell into another, and in the short intervals she raved like one distracted, or in a dream. After falling into a sound sleep by night, she recovered her equanimity, and the two began to converse seriously on what they had seen. Mrs Calvert averred that the young man who passed next to the window, *was* the very man who stabbed George Colwan in the back, and she said she was willing to take her oath on it at any time when required, and was certain if the wretch Ridsley saw him, that he would make oath to the same purport, for that his walk was so peculiar, no one of common discernment could mistake it.

Mrs Logan was in great agitation, and said, 'It is what I have suspected all along, and what I am sure my late master and benefactor was persuaded of, and the horror of such an idea cut short his days. That wretch, Mrs Calvert, is the born brother of him he murdered, sons of the same mother they were, whether or not of the same father, the Lord only knows. But, O Mrs Calvert, that is not the main thing that has discomposed me, and shaken my nerves to pieces at this time. Who do you think the young man was who walked in his company to-night?'

'I cannot for my life recollect, but am convinced I have seen the same fine form and face before.'

'And did not he seem to know us, Mrs Calvert? You who are able to recollect things as they happened, did he not seem to recollect us, and make signs to that effect?'

'He did, indeed, and apparently with great good humour.'

'O, Mrs Calvert, hold me, else I shall fall into hysterics again! Who is he? Who is he? Tell me who you suppose he is, for I cannot say my own thought.'

'On my life, I cannot remember.'

'Did you note the appearance of the young gentleman you saw slain that night? Do you recollect aught of the appearance of my young master, George Colwan?'

Mrs Calvert sat silent, and stared the other mildly in the face. Their looks enountered, and there was an unearthly amazement that gleamed from each, which, meeting together, caught real fire, and returned the flame to their heated imaginations, till the two associates became like two statues, with their hands spread, their eyes fixed, and their chops fallen down upon their bosoms. An old woman who kept the lodging-house, having been called in before when Mrs Logan was faintish, chanced to enter at this crisis with some cordial; and, seeing the state of her lodgers, she caught the infection, and fell into the same rigid and statue-like appearance. No scene more striking was ever exhibited; and if Mrs Calvert had not resumed strength of mind to speak, and break the spell, it is impossible to say how long it might have continued. 'It is he, I believe,' said she, uttering the words as it were inwardly. 'It can be none other but he. But, no, it is impossible! I saw him stabbed through and through the heart; I saw him roll backward on the green in his own blood, utter his last words, and groan away his soul. Yet, if it is not he, who can

it be?'

'It *is* he!' cried Mrs Logan, hysterically.

'Yes, yes, it *is* he!' cried the landlady, in unison.

'It is who?' said Mrs Calvert; 'whom do you mean, mistress?'

'Oh, I don't know! I don't know! I was affrighted.'

'Hold your peace then till you recover your senses, and tell me, if you can, who that young gentleman is, who keeps company with the new Laird of Dalcastle?'

'Oh, it is he! it is he!' screamed Mrs Logan, wringing her hands.

'Oh, it is he! it is he!' cried the landlady, wringing hers.

Mrs Calvert turned the latter gently and civilly out of the apartment, observing that there seemed to be some infection in the air of the room, and she would be wise for herself to keep out of it.

The two dames had a restless and hideous night. Sleep came not to their relief; for their conversation was wholly about the dead, who seemed to be alive, and their minds were wandering and groping in a chaos of mystery. 'Did you attend to his corpse, and know that he positively died and was buried?' said Mrs Calvert.

'O, yes, from the moment that his fair but mangled corpse was brought home, I attended it till that when it was screwed in the coffin. I washed the long stripes of blood from his lifeless form, on both sides of the body – I bathed the livid wound that passed through his generous and gentle heart. There was one through the flesh of his left side too, which had bled most outwardly of them all. I bathed them, and bandaged them up with wax and perfumed ointment, but still the blood oozed through all, so that when he was laid in the coffin he was like one newly murdered. My brave, my generous young master! he was always as a son to me, and no son was ever more kind or more respectful to a mother. But he was butchered – he was cut off from the earth ere he had well reached to manhood – most barbarously and unfairly slain. And how is it, how can it be, that we again see him here, walking arm in arm with his murderer?'

'The thing cannot be, Mrs Logan. It is a phantasy of our disturbed imaginations, therefore let us compose ourselves till we investigate this matter farther.'

'It cannot be in nature, that is quite clear,' said Mrs Logan; 'yet how it should be that I should *think* so – I who knew and nursed him from his infancy – there lies the paradox. As you said once before, we have nothing but our senses to depend on, and if you and I believe that we see a person, why, we do see him. Whose word, or whose reasoning can convince us against our own senses? We will disguise ourselves, as poor women selling a few country wares, and we will go up to the Hall, and see what is to see, and hear what we can hear, for this is a weighty business in which we are engaged, namely, to turn the vengeance of the law upon an unnatural monster; and we will farther learn, if we can, who this is that accompanies him.'

Mrs Calvert acquiesced, and the two dames took their way to Dalcastle, with baskets well furnished with trifles. They did not take the common path from the village, but went about, and approached the mansion by a different way. But it seemed as if some overruling power ordered it, that they should miss no chance of attaining the information they wanted. For ere ever they came within half a mile of Dalcastle, they perceived the two youths coming, as to meet them, on the same path. The road leading from Dalcastle toward the north-east, as all the country knows, goes along a dark bank of brushwood called the Bogleheuch. It was by this track that the two women were going; and when they perceived the two gentlemen meeting them, they turned back, and the moment they were out of their sight, they concealed themselves in a thicket close by the road. They did this because Mrs Logan was terrified for being discovered, and because they wished to reconnoitre without being seen. Mrs Calvert now charged her, whatever she saw, or whatever she heard, to put on a resolution, and support it, for if she fainted there and was discovered, what was to become of her!

The two young men came on, in earnest and vehement conversation; but the subject they were on was a terrible one, and hardly fit to be repeated in the face of a Christian community. Wringhim was disputing the boundlessness of the true Christian's freedom, and expressing doubts, that, chosen as he knew he was from all eternity, still it might be possible for him to commit acts that would exclude him from the limits of the covenant. The other argued, with mighty fluency, that the thing was utterly impossible, and altogether inconsistent with eternal predestination. The arguments of the latter prevailed, and the laird was driven to sullen silence. But, to the women's utter surprise, as the conquering disputant passed, he made a signal of recognizance through the brambles to them, as formerly, and that he might expose his associate fully, and in his true colours, he led him backward and forward by the women more than twenty times, making him to confess both the crimes that he had done, and those he had in contemplation. At length he said to him, 'Assuredly I saw some strolling vagrant women on this walk, my

dear friend: I wish we could find them, for there is little doubt that they are concealed here in your woods.'

'I wish we *could* find them,' answered Wringhim; 'we would have fine sport maltreating and abusing them.'

'That we should, that we should! Now tell me, Robert, if you found a malevolent woman, the latent enemy of your prosperity, lurking in these woods to betray you, what would you inflict on her?'

'I would tear her to pieces with my dogs, and feed them with her flesh. O, my dear friend, there is an old strumpet who lived with my unnatural father, whom I hold in such utter detestation, that I stand constantly in dread of her, and would sacrifice the half of my estate to shed her blood!'

'What will you give me if I will put her in your power, and give you a fair and genuine excuse for making away with her; one for which you shall answer at any bar, here or hereafter?'

'I should like to see the vile hag put down. She is in possession of the family plate, that is mine by right, as well as a thousand valuable relics, and great riches besides, all of which the old profligate gifted shamefully away. And it is said, besides all these, that she has sworn my destruction.'

'She has, she has. But I see not how she can accomplish that, seeing the deed was done so suddenly, and in the silence of the night?'

'It was said there were some on-lookers. – But where shall we find that disgraceful Miss Logan?'

'I will show you her by and by. But will you then consent to the other meritorious deed? Come, be a man, and throw away scruples.'

'If you can convince me that the promise is binding, I will.'

'Then step this way, till I give you a piece of information.'

They walked a little way out of hearing, but went not out of sight; therefore, though the women were in a terrible quandary, they durst not stir, for they had some hopes that this extraordinary person was on a mission of the same sort with themselves, knew of them, and was going to make use of their testimony. Mrs Logan was several times on the point of falling into a swoon, so much did the appearance of the young man impress her, until her associate covered her face that she might listen without embarrassment. But this latter dialogue aroused different feelings within them; namely, those arising from imminent personal danger. They saw his waggish associate point out the place of their concealment to Wringhim, who came toward them, out of curiosity to see what his friend meant by what he believed to be a joke, manifestly without crediting it in the least degree. When he came running away, the other called after him, 'If she is too hard for you, call to me.' As he said this, he hasted out of sight, in the contrary direction, apparently much delighted with the joke.

Wringhim came rushing through the thicket impetuously, to the very spot where Mrs Logan lay squatted. She held the wrapping close about her head, but he tore it off and discovered her. 'The curse of God be on thee!' said he: 'What fiend has brought thee here, and for what purpose art thou come? But, whatever has brought thee, *I have thee!*' and with that he seized her by the throat. The two women, when they heard what jeopardy they were in from such a wretch, had squatted among the underwood at a small distance from each other, so that he had never observed Mrs Calvert; but no sooner had he seized her benefactor, than, like a wild cat, she sprung out of the thicket, and had both her hands fixed at his throat, one of them twisted in his stock, in a twinkling. She brought him back-over among the brushwood, and the two, fixing on him like two harpies, mastered him with ease. Then indeed was he wofully beset. He deemed for a while that his friend was at his back, and turning his bloodshot eyes toward the path, he attempted to call; but there was no friend there, and the women cut short his cries by another twist of his stock. 'Now, gallant and rightful Laird of Dalcastle,' said Mrs Logan, 'what hast thou to say for thyself? Lay thy account to dree the weird thou hast so well earned. Now shalt thou suffer due penance for murdering thy brave and only brother.'

'Thou liest, thou hag of the pit! I touched not my brother's life.'

'I saw thee do it with these eyes that now look thee in the face; ay, when his back was to thee too, and while he was hotly engaged with thy friend,' said Mrs Calvert.

'I heard thee confess it again and again this same hour,' said Mrs Logan.

'Ay, and so did I,' said her companion. – 'Murder will out, though the Almighty should lend hearing to the ears of the willow, and speech to the seven tongues of the woodriff.'

'You are liars, and witches!' said he, foaming with rage, 'and creatures fitted from the beginning for eternal destruction. I'll have your bones and your blood sacrificed on your cursed altars! O, Gil-Martin! Gil-Martin! where art thou now? Here, here is the proper food for blessed vengeance! – Hilloa!'

There was no friend, no Gil-Martin there to hear or assist him: he was in the two women's mercy, but they used it with moderation. They mocked, they tormented, and they threatened him; but, finally, after putting him in great terror, they bound his hands behind his back, and his feet fast with long straps of

garters which they chanced to have in their baskets, to prevent him from pursuing them till they were out of his reach. As they left him, which they did in the middle of the path, Mrs Calvert said, 'We could easily put an end to thy sinful life, but our hands shall be free of thy blood. Nevertheless thou art still in our power, and the vengeance of thy country shall overtake thee, thou mean and cowardly murderer, ay, and that more suddenly than thou art aware!'

The women posted to Edinburgh; and as they put themselves under the protection of an English merchant, who was journeying thither with twenty horses loaden, and armed servants, so they had scarcely any conversation on the road. When they arrived at Mrs Logan's house, then they spoke of what they had seen and heard, and agreed that they had sufficient proof to condemn young Wringhim, who they thought richly deserved the severest doom of the law.

'I never in my life saw any human being,' said Mrs Calvert, 'whom I thought so like a fiend. If a demon could inherit flesh and blood, that youth is precisely such a being as I could conceive that demon to be. The depth and the malignity of his eye is hideous. His breath is like the airs from a charnel house, and his flesh seems fading from his bones, as if the worm that never dies were gnawing it away already.'

'He was always repulsive, and every way repulsive,' said the other; 'but he is now indeed altered greatly to the worse. While we were handfasting him, I felt his body to be feeble and emaciated; but yet I know him to be so puffed up with spiritual pride, that I believe he weens every one of his actions justified before God, and instead of having stings of conscience for these, he takes great merit to himself in having effected them. Still my thoughts are less about him than the extraordinary being who accompanies him. He does every thing with so much ease and indifference, so much velocity and effect, that all bespeak him an adept in wickedness. The likeness to my late hapless young master is so striking, that I can hardly believe it to be a chance model; and I think he imitates him in every thing, for some purpose, or some effect on his sinful associate. Do you know that he is so like in every lineament, look, and gesture, that, against the clearest light of reason, I cannot in my mind separate the one from the other, and have a certain indefinable impression on my mind, that they are one and the same being, or that the one was a prototype of the other.'

'If there is an earthly crime,' said Mrs Calvert, 'for the due punishment of which the Almighty may be supposed to subvert the order of nature, it is fratricide. But tell me, dear friend, did you remark to what the subtile and hellish villain was endeavouring to prompt the assassin?'

'No, I could not comprehend it. My senses were altogether so bewildered, that I thought they had combined to deceive me, and I gave them no credit.'

'Then hear me: I am almost certain he was using every persuasion to induce him to make away with his mother; and I likewise conceive that I heard the incendiary give his consent!'

'This is dreadful. Let us speak and think no more about it, till we see the issue. In the meantime, let us do that which is our bounden duty, – go and divulge all that we know relating to this foul murder.'

Accordingly the two women went to Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, the Lord Justice Clerk, (who was, I think, either uncle or grandfather to young Drummond, who was outlawed, and obliged to fly his country on account of Colwan's death,) and to that gentleman they related every circumstance of what they had seen and heard. He examined Calvert very minutely, and seemed deeply interested in her evidence – said he knew she was relating the truth, and in testimony of it, brought a letter of young Drummond's from his desk, wherein that young gentleman, after protesting his innocence in the most forcible terms, confessed having been with such a woman in such a house, after leaving the company of his friends; and that on going home, Sir Thomas's servant had let him in, in the dark, and from these circumstances he found it impossible to prove an *alibi*. He begged of his relative, if ever an opportunity offered, to do his endeavour to clear up that mystery, and remove the horrid stigma from his name in his country, and among his kin, of having stabbed a friend behind his back.

Lord Craigie, therefore, directed the two women to the proper authorities, and after hearing their evidence there, it was judged proper to apprehend the present Laird of Dalcastle, and bring him to his trial. But before that, they sent the prisoner in the tolbooth, he who had seen the whole transaction along with Mrs Calvert, to take a view of Wringhim privately; and his discrimination being so well known as to be proverbial all over the land, they determined secretly to be ruled by this report. They accordingly sent him on a pretended mission of legality to Dalcastle, with orders to see and speak with the proprietor, without giving him a hint what was wanted. On his return, they examined him, and he told them that he found all things at the place in utter confusion and dismay; that the lady of the place was missing, and could not be found, dead or alive. On being asked if he had ever seen the proprietor before, he looked astounded, and unwilling to answer. But it came out that he had; and that he had once seen him kill a man on such a spot at such an hour.

Officers were then despatched, without delay, to apprehend the monster, and bring him to justice. On

these going to the mansion, and inquiring for him, they were told he was at home; on which they stationed guards, and searched all the premises, but he was not to be found. It was in vain that they overturned beds, raised floors, and broke open closets: Robert Wringhim Colwan was lost once and for ever. His mother also was lost; and strong suspicions attached to some of the farmers and house servants, to whom she was obnoxious, relating to her disappearance. The Honourable Thomas Drummond became a distinguished officer in the Austrian service, and died in the memorable year for Scotland, 1715; and this is all with which history, justiciary records, and tradition, furnish me relating to these matters.

I have now the pleasure of presenting my readers with an original document of a most singular nature, and preserved for their perusal in a still more singular manner. I offer no remarks on it, and make as few additions to it, leaving every one to judge for himself. We have heard much of the rage of fanaticism in former days, but nothing to this.

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Sinner

Written by Himself

Private Memoirs and Confessions

My life has been a life of trouble and turmoil; of change and vicissitude; of anger and exultation; of sorrow and of vengeance. My sorrows have all been for a slighted gospel, and my vengeance has been wreaked on its adversaries. Therefore, in the might of heaven I will sit down and write: I will let the wicked of this world know what I have done in the faith of the promises, and justification by grace, that they may read and tremble, and bless their gods of silver and of gold, that the minister of heaven was removed from their sphere before their blood was mingled with their sacrifices.

I was born an outcast in the world, in which I was destined to act so conspicuous a part. My mother was a burning and a shining light, in the community of Scottish worthies, and in the days of her virginity had suffered much in the persecution of the saints. But it so pleased Heaven, that, as a trial of her faith, she was married to one of the wicked; a man all over spotted with the leprosy of sin. As well might they have conjoined fire and water together, in hopes that they would consort and amalgamate, as purity and corruption: She fled from his embraces the first night after their marriage, and from that time forth, his iniquities so galled her upright heart, that she quitted his society altogether, keeping her own apartments in the same house with him.

I was the second son of this unhappy marriage, and, long ere ever I was born, my father according to the flesh disclaimed all relation or connection with me, and all interest in me, save what the law compelled him to take, which was to grant me a scanty maintenance; and had it not been for a faithful minister of the gospel, my mother's early instructor, I should have remained an outcast from the church visible. He took pity on me, admitting me not only into that, but into the bosom of his own household and ministry also, and to him am I indebted, under Heaven, for the high conceptions and glorious discernment between good and evil, right and wrong, which I attained even at an early age. It was he who directed my studies aright, both in the learning of the ancient fathers, and the doctrines of the reformed church, and designed me for his assistant and successor in the holy office. I missed no opportunity of perfecting myself particularly in all the minute points of theology in which my reverend father and mother took great delight; but at length I acquired so much skill, that I astonished my teachers, and made them gaze at one another. I remember that it was the custom, in my patron's house, to ask the questions of the Single Catechism round every Sabbath night. He asked the first, my mother the second, and so on, every one saying the question asked, and then asking the next. It fell to my mother to ask Effectual Calling at me. I said the answer with propriety and emphasis. 'Now, madam,' added I, 'my question to you is, What is *In*effectual Calling?'

'Ineffectual Calling? There is no such thing, Robert,' said she.

'But there is, madam,' said I; 'and that answer proves how much you say these fundamental precepts by rote, and without any consideration. Ineffectual Calling is, *the outward call of the gospel* without any effect on the hearts of unregenerated and impenitent sinners. Have not all these the same calls, warnings, doctrines, and reproofs, that we have? and is not this *In*effectual Calling? Has not Ardinferry the same? Has not Patrick M'Lure the same? *Has not the Laird of Dalcastle and his reprobate heir* the same? And will any tell me, that *this is not In*effectual Calling?'

'What a wonderful boy he is!' said my mother.

'I'm feared he turn out to be a conceited gowk,' said old Barnet, the minister's man.

'No,' said my pastor, and *father*, (as I shall henceforth denominate him,) 'No, Barnet, he *is* a wonderful boy; and no marvel, for I have prayed for these talents to be bestowed on him from his infancy: and do you think that Heaven would refuse a prayer so disinterested? No, it is impossible. But my dread is, madam,' continued he, turning to my mother, 'that he is yet in the bond of iniquity.'

'God forbid!' said my mother.

'I have struggled with the Almighty long and hard,' continued he; 'but have as yet had no certain token of acceptance in his behalf. I have indeed fought a hard fight, but have been repulsed by him who hath seldom refused my request; although I cited his own words against him, and endeavoured to hold him at his promise, he hath so many turnings in the supremacy of his power, that I have been rejected. How dreadful is it to think of our darling being still without the pale of the covenant! But I have vowed a vow, and in that there is hope.'

My heart quaked with terror, when I thought of being still living in a state of reprobation, subjected to the awful issues of death, judgment, and eternal misery, by the slightest accident or casualty, and I set about the duty of prayer myself with the utmost earnestness. I prayed three times every day, and seven times on the Sabbath; but the more frequently and fervently that I prayed, I sinned still the more. About this time, and for a long period afterwards, amounting to several years, I lived in a hopeless and deplorable state of mind; for I said to myself, 'If my name is not written in the book of life from all eternity, it is in vain for me to presume that either vows or prayers of mine, or those of all mankind combined, can ever procure its insertion now.' I had come under many vows, most solemnly taken, every one of which I had broken; and I saw with the intensity of juvenile grief, that there was no hope for me. I went on sinning every hour, and all the while most strenuously warring against sin, and repenting of every one transgression, as soon after the commission of it as I got leisure to think. But O what a wretched state this unregenerated state is, in which every effort after righteousness only aggravates our offences! I found it vanity to contend; for after communing with my heart, the conclusion was as follows: 'If I could repent me of all my sins, and shed tears of blood for them, still have I not a load of original transgression pressing on me, that is enough to crush me to the lowest hell. I may be angry with my first parents for having sinned, but how I shall repent me of their sin, is beyond what I am able to comprehend.'

Still, in those days of depravity and corruption, I had some of those principles implanted in my mind, which were afterward to spring up with such amazing fertility among the heroes of the faith and the promises. In particular, I felt great indignation against all the wicked of this world, and often wished for the means of ridding it of such a noxious burden. I liked John Barnet, my reverend father's serving-man, extremely ill; but, from a supposition that he might be one of the justified, I refrained from doing him any injury. He gave always his word against me, and when we were by ourselves, in the barn or the fields, he rated me with such severity for my faults, that my heart could brook it no longer. He discovered some notorious lies that I had framed, and taxed me with them in such a manner that I could in nowise get off. My cheek burnt with offence, rather than shame; and he, thinking he had got the mastery of me, exulted over me most unmercifully, telling me I was a selfish and conceited blackguard, who made great pretences towards religious devotion to cloak a disposition tainted with deceit, and that it would not much astonish him if I brought myself to the fallows.

I gathered some courage from his over severity, and answered him as follows: 'Who made thee a judge of the actions or dispositions of the Almighty's creatures—thou who art a worm, and no man in his sight? How it befits thee to deal out judgments and anathemas! Hath he not made one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, as in the case with myself and thee? Hath he not builded his stories in the heavens, and laid the foundations thereof in the earth, and how can a being like thee judge between good and evil, that are both subjected to the workings of his hand; or of the opposing principles in the soul of man, correcting, modifying, and refining one another?'

I said this with that strong display of fervor for which I was remarkable at my years, and expected old Barnet to be utterly confounded; but he only shook his head, and, with the most provoking grin, said, 'There he goes! sickan sublime and ridiculous sophistry I never heard come out of another mouth but ane. There needs nae aiths to be sworn afore the session wha is your father, young goodman. I ne'er, for my part, saw a son sae like a dad, sin'my een first opened.' With that he went away, saying, with an ill-natured wince, 'You made to honour and me to dishonour! Dirty bowkail thing that thou be'st!'

'I will have the old rascal on the hip for this, if I live,' thought I. So I went and asked my mother if John was a righteous man? She could not tell, but supposed he was, and therefore I got no encouragement from her. I went next to my reverend father, and inquired his opinion, expecting as little from that quarter. He knew the elect as it were by instinct, and could have told you of all those in his own, and some neighbouring parishes, who were born within the boundaries of the covenant of promise, and who were not.

'I keep a good deal in company with your servant, old Barnet, father,' said I.

'You do, boy; you do, I see', said he.

'I wish I may not keep too much in his company,' said I, 'not knowing what kind of society I am in;—is John a good man, father?'

'Why, boy, he is but so, so. A morally good man John is, but very little of the leaven of true righteousness, which is faith, within. I am afraid old Barnet, with all his stock of morality, will be a cast-away.'

My heart was greatly cheered by this remark; and I sighed very deeply, and hung my head to one side. The worthy father observed me, and inquired the cause? when I answered as follows: 'How dreadful the thought, that I have been going daily in company and fellowship with one, whose name is written on the

red-letter side of the book of life; whose body and soul have been, from all eternity, consigned over to everlasting destruction, and to whom the blood of the atonement can never, never reach! Father, this is an awful thing, and beyond my comprehension.'

'While we are in the world, we must mix with the inhabitants thereof,' said he; 'and the stains which adhere to us by reason of this admixture, which is unavoidable, shall all be washed away. It is our duty, however, to shun the society of wicked men as much as possible, lest we partake of their sins, and become sharers with them in punishment. John, however, is a morally good man, and may yet get a cast of grace.'

'I always thought him a good man till to-day,' said I, 'when he threw out some reflections on your character, so horrible that I quake to think of the wickedness and malevolence of his heart. He was rating me very impertinently for some supposed fault, which had no being save in his own jealous brain, when I attempted to reason him out of his belief in the spirit of calm Christian argument. But how do you think he answered me? He did so, sir, by twisting his mouth at me, and remarking that such sublime and ridiculous sophistry never came out of another mouth but one, (meaning yours,) and that no oath before a kirk session was necessary to prove who was my dad, for that he had never seen a son so like a father as I was like mine.'

'He durst not for his soul's salvation, and for his daily bread, which he values much more, say such a word, boy; therefore take care what you assert,' said my reverend father.

'He said these very words, and will not deny them, sir,' said I.

My reverend father turned about in great wrath and indignation, and went away in search of John; but I kept out of the way, and listened at a back window; for John was dressing the plot of ground behind the house; and I hope it was no sin in me that I did rejoice in the dialogue which took place, it being the victory of righteousness over error.

'Well, John, this is a fine day for your delving work.'

'Ey, it's a tolerable day, sir.'

'Are you thankful in your heart, John, for such temporal mercies as these?'

'Aw doubt we're a' ower little thankfu', sir, baith for temporal an' speeritual mercies; but it isna aye the maist thankfu' heart that makes the greatest fraze wi' the tongue.'

'I hope there is nothing personal under that remark, John?'

'Gin the bannet fits ony body's head, they're unco welcome to it, sir, for me.'

'John, I do not approve of these innuendoes. You have an arch malicious manner of vending your aphorisms, which the men of the world are too apt to read the wrong way, for your dark hints are sure to have *one* very bad meaning.'

'Hout na, sir, it's only bad folks that think sae. They find ma bits o'gibes come hame to their hearts wi' a kind o' yerk, an' that gars them wince.'

'That saying is ten times worse than the other, John; it is a manifest insult: it is just telling me to my face, that you think me a bad man.'

'A body canna help his thoughts, sir.'

'No, but a man's thoughts are generally formed from observation. Now I should like to know, even from the mouth of a misbeliever, what part of my conduct warrants such a conclusion?'

'Nae particular pairt, sir; I draw a' my conclusions frae the haill o' a man's character, an' I'm no that after far wrang.'

'Well, John, and what sort of general character do you suppose mine to be?'

'Yours is a Scripture character, sir, an' I'll prove it.'

'I hope so, John. Well, which of the Scripture characters do you think approximates nearest to my own?'

'Guess, sir, guess; I wish to lead a proof.'

'Why, if it be an Old Testament character, I hope it is Melchizedek, for at all events you cannot deny there is one point of resemblance: I, like him, am a preacher of righteousness. If it be a New Testament character, I suppose you mean the Apostle of the Gentiles, of whom I am an unworthy representative.'

'Na, na, sir, better nor that still, an'fer closer is the resemblance. When ye bring me to the point, I maun speak. Ye are the just Pharisee, sir, that gaed up wi' the poor publican to pray in the Temple; an' ye're acting the very same pairt at this time, an' saying i' your heart, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, an' in nae way like this poor misbelieving unregenerate sinner, John Barnet."'

'I hope I may say so indeed.'

'There now! I tauld you how it was! But, d'ye hear, maister: Here stands the poor sinner, John Barnet, your beadle an' servant-man, wha wadna change chances wi' you in the neist world, nor consciences in this, for ten times a' that you possess,—your justification by faith an' awthegither.'

‘You are extremely audacious and impertinent, John; but the language of reprobation cannot affect me: I came only to ask you one question, which I desire you to answer candidly. Did you ever say to any one that I was the boy Robert’s natural father?’

‘Hout na, sir! Ha—ha—ha—ha! Aih, fie na, sir! I durstna say that for my life. I doubt the black stool, an’ the sack gown, or maybe the juggs was hae been my portion had I said sic a thing as that. Hout, hout! Fie, fie! Unco-like doings thae for a Melchizedek or a Saint Paul!’

‘John, you are a profane old man, and I desire that you will not presume to break your jests on me. Tell me, dare you say, or dare you think, that I am the natural father of that boy?’

‘Ye canna hinder me to think whatever I like, sir, nor can I hinder mysel.’

‘But did you ever *say* to any one, that he resembled me, and fathered himself well enough?’

‘I hae said mony a time, that he resembled you, sir. Naebody can mistake that.’

‘But, John, there are many natural reasons for such likenesses, besides that of consanguinity. They depend much on the thoughts and affections of the mother; and, it is probable, that the mother of this boy, being deserted by her worthless husband, having turned her thoughts on me, as likely to be her protector, may have caused this striking resemblance.’

‘Ay, it may be, sir. I coudna say.’

‘I have known a lady, John, who was delivered of a blackamoor child, merely from the circumstance of having got a start by the sudden entrance of her negro servant, and not being able to forget him for several hours.’

‘It may be, sir; but I ken this;—an I had been the laird, I wadna hae ta’en that story in.’

‘So, then, John, you positively think, from a casual likeness, that this boy is my son?’

‘Man’s thoughts are vanity, sir; they come unasked, an gang away without a dismissal, an’ he canna help them. I’m neither gaun to say that I *think* he’s your son, nor that I think he’s *no* your son: sae ye needna pose me nae mair about it.’

‘Hear then my determination, John: If you do not promise to me, in faith and honour, that you never will say, or insinuate such a thing again in your life, as that that boy is my natural son, I will take the keys of the church from you, and dismiss you my service.’

John pulled out the keys, and dashed them on the gravel at the reverend minister’s feet. ‘There are the keys o’ your kirk, sir! I hae never had muckle mense o’ them sin’ ye entered the door o’t. I hae carried them this three an thretty year, but they hae aye been like to burn a hole i’ my pouch sin’ ever they were turned for your admittance. Tak them again, an’ gie them to wha you will, and muckle gude may he get o’ them. Auld John may dee a beggar in a hay barn, or at the back of a dike, but he sall aye be master o’ his ain thoughts, an’ gie them vent or no, as he likes.’

He left the manse that day, and I rejoiced in the riddance; for I disdained to be kept so much under, by one who was in the bond of inquity, and of whom there seemed no hope, as he rejoiced in his frowardness, and refused to submit to that faithful teacher, his master.

It was about this time that my reverend father preached a sermon, one sentence of which affected me most disagreeably: It was to the purport, that every unrepented sin was productive of a new sin with each breath that a man drew; and every one of these new sins added to the catalogue in the same manner. I was utterly confounded at the multitude of my transgressions; for I was sensible that there were great numbers of sins of which I had never been able thoroughly to repent, and these momentary ones, by a moderate calculation, had, I saw, long ago, amounted to a hundred and fifty thousand in the minute, and I saw no end to the series of repentances to which I had subjected myself. A life-time was nothing to enable me to accomplish the sum, and then being, for any thing I was certain of, in my state of nature, and the grace of repentance withheld from me,—what was I to do, or what was to become of me? In the meantime, I went on sinning without measure; but I was still more troubled about the multitude than the magnitude of my transgressions, and the small minute ones puzzled me more than those that were more heinous, as the latter had generally some good effects in the way of punishing wicked men, froward boys, and deceitful women; and I rejoiced, even then in my early youth, at being used as a scourge in the hand of the Lord; another Jehu, a Cyrus, or a Nebuchadnezzar.

On the whole, I remember that I got into great confusion relating to my sins and repentances, and knew neither where to begin nor how to proceed, and often had great fears that I was wholly without Christ, and that I would find God a consuming fire to me. I could not help running into new sins continually; but then I was mercifully dealt with, for I was often made to repent of them most heartily, by reason of bodily chastisements received on these delinquencies being discovered. I was particularly prone to lying, and I cannot but admire the mercy that has freely forgiven me all these juvenile sins. Now that I know them all to be blotted out, and that I am an accepted person, I may the more freely confess them: the truth is, that one lie always paved the way for another, from hour to hour, from day to day, and from

year to year; so that I found myself constantly involved in a labyrinth of deceit, from which it was impossible to extricate myself. If I knew a person to be a godly one, I could almost have kissed his feet; but against the carnal portion of mankind, I set my face continually. I esteemed the true ministers of the gospel; but the prelatic party, and the preachers up of good works I abhorred, and to this hour I account them the worst and most heinous of all transgressors.

There was only one boy at Mr Wilson's class who kept always the upper hand of me in every part of education. I strove against him from year to year, but it was all in vain; for he was a very wicked boy, and I was convinced he had dealings with the devil. Indeed it was believed all over the country that his mother was a witch; and I was at length convinced that it was no human ingenuity that beat me with so much ease in the Latin, after I had often sat up a whole night with my reverend father, studying my lesson in all its bearings. I often read as well and sometimes better than he; but the moment Mr Wilson began to examine us, my opponent popped up above me. I determined, (as I knew him for a wicked person, and one of the devil's hand-fasted children,) to be revenged on him, and to humble him by some means or other. Accordingly I lost no opportunity of setting the Master against him, and succeeded several times in getting him severely beaten for faults of which he was innocent. I can hardly describe the joy that it gave to my heart to see a wicked creature suffering, for though he deserved it not for one thing, he richly deserved it for others. This may be by some people accounted a great sin in me; but I deny it, for I did it as a duty, and what a man or boy does for the right, will never be put into the sum of his transgressions.

This boy, whose name was M'Gill, was, at all his leisure hours, engaged in drawing profane pictures of beasts, men, women, houses, and trees, and, in short, of all things that his eye encountered. These profane things the Master often smiled at, and admired; therefore I began privately to try my hand likewise. I had scarcely tried above once to draw the figure of a man, ere I conceived that I had hit the very features of Mr Wilson. They were so particular, that they could not be easily mistaken, and I was so tickled and pleased with the droll likeness that I had drawn, that I laughed immoderately at it. I tried no other figure but this; and I tried it in every situation in which a man and a schoolmaster could be placed. I often wrought for hours together at this likeness, nor was it long before I made myself so much master of the outline, that I could have drawn it in any situation whatever, almost off hand. I then took M'Gill's account book of algebra home with me, and at my leisure put down a number of gross caricatures of Mr Wilson here and there, several of them in situations notoriously ludicrous. I waited the discovery of this treasure with great impatience; but the book, chancing to be one that M'Gill was not using, I saw it might be long enough before I enjoyed the consummation of my grand scheme: therefore, with all the ingenuity I was master of, I brought it before our dominie's eye. But never shall I forget the rage that gleamed in the tyrant's phiz! I was actually terrified to look at him, and trembled at his voice. M'Gill was called upon, and examined relating to the obnoxious figures. He denied flatly that any of them were of his doing. But the Master inquiring at him whose they were, he could not tell, but affirmed it to be some trick. Mr Wilson at one time, began, as I thought, to hesitate; but the evidence was so strong against M'Gill, that at length his solemn asseverations of innocence only proved an aggravation of his crime. There was not one in the school who had ever been known to draw a figure but himself, and on him fell the whole weight of the tyrant's vengeance. It was dreadful; and I was once in hopes that he would not leave life in the culprit. He, however, left the school for several months, refusing to return to be subjected to punishment for the faults of others, and I stood king of the class.

Matters were at last made up between M'Gill's parents and the schoolmaster, but by that time I had got the start of him, and never in my life did I exert myself so much as to keep the mastery. It was in vain; the powers of enchantment prevailed, and I was again turned down with the tear in my eye. I could think of no amends but one, and being driven to desperation, I put it in practice. I told a lie of him. I came boldly up to the master, and told him that M'Gill had in my hearing cursed him in a most shocking manner, and called him vile names. He called M'Gill, and charged him with the crime, and the proud young coxcomb was so stunned at the atrocity of the charge, that his face grew as red as crimson, and the words stuck in his throat as he feebly denied it. His guilt was manifest, and he was again flogged most nobly, and dismissed the school for ever in disgrace, as a most incorrigible vagabond.

This was a great victory gained, and I rejoiced and exulted exceedingly in it. It had, however, very nigh cost me my life; for not long thereafter, I encountered M'Gill in the fields, on which he came up and challenged me for a liar, daring me to fight him. I refused, and said that I looked on him as quite below my notice; but he would not quit me, and finally told me that he should either *lick me*, or I should *lick him*, as he had no other means of being revenged on such a scoundrel. I tried to intimidate him, but it would not do; and I believe I would have given all that I had in the world to be quit of him. He at length went so far as first to kick me, and then strike me on the face; and, being both older and stronger than he,

I thought it scarcely became me to take such insults patiently. I was, nevertheless, well aware that the devilish powers of his mother would finally prevail; and either the dread of this, or the inward consciousness of having wronged him, certainly unnerved my arm, for I fought wretchedly, and was soon wholly overcome. I was so sore defeated, that I kneeled, and was going to beg his pardon; but another thought struck me momentarily, and I threw myself on my face, and inwardly begged aid from heaven; at the same time I felt as if assured that my prayer was heard, and would be answered. While I was in this humble attitude, the villain kicked me with his foot and cursed me; and I being newly encouraged, arose and encountered him once more. We had not fought long at this second turn, before I saw a man hastening toward us; on which I uttered a shout of joy, and laid on valiantly; but my very next look assured me, that the man was old John Barnet, whom I had likewise wronged all that was in my power, and between these two wicked persons I expected anything but justice. My arm was again enfeebled, and that of my adversary prevailed. I was knocked down and mauled most grievously, and while the ruffian was kicking and cuffing me at his will and pleasure, up came old John Barnet, breathless with running, and at one blow with his open hand, levelled my opponent with the earth. 'Tak ye that, maister!' says John, 'to learn ye better breeding. Hout awa, man! an ye will fight, fight fair. Gude sauf us, ir ye a gentleman's brood, that ye will kick an'cuff a lad when he's down?'

When I heard this kind and unexpected interference, I began once more to value myself on my courage, and springing up, I made at my adversary; but John, without saying a word, bit his lip, and seizing me by the neck, threw me down. M'Gill begged of him to stand and see fair play, and suffer us to finish the battle; for, added he, 'he is a liar, and a scoundrel, and deserves ten times more than I can give him.'

'I ken he's a' that ye say, an' mair, my man,' quoth John: 'But am I sure that ye're no as bad, an' waur? It says nae muckle for ony o' ye to be tearing like tikes at ane anither here.'

John cocked his cudgel and stood between us, threatening to knock the one dead, who first offered to lift his hand against the other; but, perceiving no disposition in any of us to separate, he drove me home before him like a bullock, keeping close guard behind me, lest M'Gill had followed. I felt greatly indebted to John, yet I complained of his interference to my mother, and the old officious sinner got no thanks for his pains.

As I am writing only from recollection, so I remember of nothing farther in these early days, in the least worthy of being recorded. That I was a great, a transcendent sinner, I confess. But still I had hopes of forgiveness, because I never sinned from principle, but accident; and then I always *tried* to repent of these sins by the slump, for individually it was impossible; and though not always successful in my endeavours, I could not help that; the grace of repentance being withheld from me, I regarded myself as in no degree accountable for the failure. Moreover, there were many of the most deadly sins into which I never fell, for I dreaded those mentioned in the Revelations as excluding sins, so that I guarded against them continually. In particular, I brought myself to despise, if not to abhor, the beauty of women, looking on it as the greatest snare to which mankind are subjected, and though young men and maidens, and even old women, (my mother among the rest,) taxed me with being an unnatural wretch, I gloried in my acquisition; and to this day, am thankful for having escaped the most dangerous of all snares.

I kept myself also free of the sins of idolatry, and misbelief, both of a deadly nature; and, upon the whole, I think I had not then broken, that is, absolutely broken, above four out of the ten commandments; but for all that, I had more sense than to regard either my good works, or my evil deeds, as in the smallest degree influencing the eternal decrees of God concerning me, either with regard to my acceptance or reprobation. I depended entirely on the bounty of free grace, holding all the righteousness of man as filthy rags, and believing in the momentous and magnificent truth, that the more heavily loaden with transgressions, the more welcome was the believer at the throne of grace. And I have reason to believe that it was this dependence and this belief that at last ensured my acceptance there.

I come now to the most important period of my existence,—the period that has modelled my character, and influenced every action of my life,—without which, this detail of my actions would have been as a tale that hath been told—a monotonous *farrago*—an uninteresting harangue—in short, a thing of nothing. Whereas, lo! it must now be a relation of great and terrible actions, done in the might, and by the commission of heaven. *Amen*.

Like the sinful king of Israel, I had been walking softly before the Lord for a season. I had been humbled for my transgressions, and, as far as I recollect, sorry on account of their numbers and heinousness. My reverend father had been, moreover, examining me every day regarding the state of my soul, and my answers sometimes appeared to give him satisfaction, and sometimes not. As for my mother, she would harp on the subject of my faith for ever; yet, though I knew her to be a Christian, I confess that I always despised her motley instructions, nor had I any great regard for her person. If this was a crime in me, I never could help it. I confess it freely, and believe it was a judgment from heaven inflicted on her

for some sin of former days, and that I had no power to have acted otherwise toward her than I did.

In this frame of mind was I, when my reverend father one morning arose from his seat, and, meeting me as I entered the room, he embraced me, and welcomed me into the community of the just upon earth. I was struck speechless, and could make no answer save by looks of surprise. My mother also came to me, kissed, and wept over me; and after showering unnumbered blessings on my head, she also welcomed me into the society of *the just made perfect*. Then each of them took me by a hand, and my reverend father explained to me how he had wrestled with God, as the patriarch of old had done, not for a night, but for days and years, and that in bitterness and anguish of spirit, on my account; but that *he* had at last prevailed, and had now gained the long and earnestly desired assurance of my acceptance with the Almighty, in and through the merits and sufferings of his Son: That I was now a justified person, adopted among the number of God's children—my name written in the Lamb's book of life, and that no bypast transgression, nor any future act of my own, or of other men, could be instrumental in altering the decree. 'All the powers of darkness,' added he, 'shall never be able to pluck you again out of your Redeemer's hand. And now, my son, be strong and stedfast in the truth. Set your face against sin, and sinful men, and resist even to blood, as many of the faithful of this land have done, and your reward shall be double. I am assured of your acceptance by the word and spirit of him who cannot err, and your sanctification and repentance unto life will follow in due course. Rejoice and be thankful, for you are plucked as a brand out of the burning, and now your redemption is sealed and sure.'

I wept for joy to be thus assured of my freedom from all sin, and of the impossibility of my ever again falling away from my new state. I bounded away into the fields and the woods, to pour out my spirit in prayer before the Almighty for his kindness to me: my whole frame seemed to be renewed; every nerve was buoyant with new life; I felt as if I could have flown in the air, or leaped over the tops of the trees. An exaltation of spirit lifted me, as it were, far above the earth, and the sinful creatures crawling on its surface; and I deemed myself as an eagle among the children of men, soaring on high, and looking down with pity and contempt on the grovelling creatures below.

As I thus wended my way, I beheld a young man of a mysterious appearance coming towards me. I tried to shun him, being bent on my own contemplations; but he cast himself in my way, so that I could not well avoid him; and more than that, I felt a sort of invisible power that drew me towards him, something like the force of enchantment, which I could not resist. As we approached each other, our eyes met, and I can never describe the strange sensations that thrilled through my whole frame at that impressive moment; a moment to me fraught with the most tremendous consequences; the beginning of a series of adventures which has puzzled myself, and will puzzle the world when I am no more in it. That time will now soon arrive, sooner than any one can devise who knows not the tumult of my thoughts, and the labour of my spirit; and when it hath come and passed over,—when my flesh and my bones are decayed, and my soul has passed to its everlasting home, then shall the sons of men ponder on the events of my life; wonder and tremble, and tremble and wonder how such things should be.

That stranger youth and I approached each other in silence, and slowly, with our eyes fixed on each other's eyes. We approached till not more than a yard intervened between us, and then stood still and gazed, measuring each other from head to foot. What was my astonishment, on perceiving that he was the same being as myself! The clothes were the same to the smallest item. The form was the same; the apparent age; the colour of the hair; the eyes; and, as far as recollection could serve me from viewing my own features in a glass, the features too were the very same. I conceived at first, that I saw a vision, and that my guardian angel had appeared to me at this important era of my life; but this singular being read my thoughts in my looks, anticipating the very words that I was going to utter.

'You think I am your brother,' said he; 'or that I am your second self. I am indeed your brother, not according to the flesh, but in my belief of the same truths, and my assurance in the same mode of redemption, than which, I hold nothing so great or so glorious on earth.'

'Then you are an associate well adapted to my present state,' said I. 'For this time is a time of great rejoicing in spirit to me. I am on my way to return thanks to the Most High for my redemption from the bonds of sin and misery. If you will join with me heart and hand in youthful thanksgiving, then shall we two go and worship together; but if not, go your way, and I shall go mine.'

'Ah, you little know with how much pleasure I will accompany you, and join with you in your elevated devotions,' said he fervently. 'Your state is a state to be envied indeed; but I have been advised of it, and am come to be a humble disciple of yours; to be initiated into the true way of salvation by conversing with you, and perhaps by being assisted by your prayers.'

My spiritual pride being greatly elevated by this address, I began to assume the preceptor, and questioned this extraordinary youth with regard to his religious principles, telling him plainly, if he was one who expected acceptance with God at all, on account of good works, that I would hold no

communion with him. He renounced these at once, with the greatest vehemence, and declared his acquiescence in my faith. I asked if he believed in the eternal and irrevocable decrees of God, regarding the salvation and condemnation of all mankind? He answered that he did so: aye, what would signify all things else that he believed, if he did not believe in that? We then went on to commune about all our points of belief; and in every thing that I suggested, he acquiesced, and, as I thought that day, often carried them to extremes, so that I had a secret dread he was advancing blasphemies. Yet he had such a way with him, and paid such a deference to all my opinions, that I was quite captivated, and, at the same time, I stood in a sort of awe of him, which I could not account for, and several times was seized with an involuntary inclination to escape from his presence, by making a sudden retreat. But he seemed constantly to anticipate my thoughts, and was sure to divert my purpose by some turn in the conversation that particularly interested me. He took care to dwell much on the theme of the impossibility of those ever falling away, who were once accepted and received into covenant with God, for he seemed to know, that in that confidence, and that trust, my whole hopes were centred.

We moved about from one place to another, until the day was wholly spent. My mind had all the while been kept in a state of agitation resembling the motion of a whirlpool, and when we came to separate, I then discovered that the purpose for which I had sought the fields had been neglected, and that I had been diverted from the worship of God, by attending to the quibbles and dogmas of this singular and unaccountable being, who seemed to have more knowledge and information than all the persons I had ever known put together.

We parted with expressions of mutual regret, and when I left him I felt a deliverance, but at the same time a certain consciousness that I was not thus to get free of him, but that he was like to be an acquaintance that was to stick to me for good or for evil. I was astonished at his acuteness and knowledge about every thing; but as for his likeness to me, that was quite unaccountable. He was the same person in every respect, but yet he was not always so; for I observed several times, when we were speaking of certain divines and their tenets, that his face assumed something of the appearance of theirs; and it struck me, that by setting his features to the mould of other people's, he entered at once into their conceptions and feelings. I had been greatly flattered, and greatly interested by his conversation; whether I had been the better for it or the worse, I could not tell. I had been diverted from returning thanks to my gracious Maker for his great kindness to me, and came home as I went away, but not with the same buoyancy and lightness of heart. Well may I remember that day in which I was first received into the number, and made an heir to all the privileges of the children of God, and on which I first met this mysterious associate, who from that day forth contrived to wind himself into all my affairs, both spiritual and temporal, to this day on which I am writing the account of it. It was on the 25th day of March 1704, when I had just entered the eighteenth year of my age. Whether it behoves me to bless God for the events of that day, or to deplore them, has been hid from my discernment, though I have inquired into it with fear and trembling; and I have now lost all hopes of ever discovering the true import of these events until that day when my accounts are to make up and reckon for in another world.

When I came home, I went straight into the parlour, where my mother was sitting by herself. She started to her feet, and uttered a smothered scream. 'What ails you, Robert?' cried she. 'My dear son, what is the matter with you?'

'Do you see any thing the matter with me?' said I. 'It appears that the ailment is with yourself, and either in your crazed head or your dim eyes, for there is nothing the matter with me.'

'Ah, Robert, you are ill!' cried she; 'you are very ill, my dear boy; you are quite changed; your very voice and manner are changed. Ah, Jane, haste you up to the study, and tell Mr Wringhim to come here on the instant and speak to Robert.'

'I beseech you, woman, to restrain yourself,' said I. 'If you suffer your frenzy to run away with your judgment in this manner, I will leave the house. What do you mean? I tell you, there is nothing ails me: I never was better.'

She screamed, and ran between me and the door, to bar my retreat: in the meantime my reverend father entered, and I have not forgot how he gazed, through his glasses, first at my mother, and then at me. I imagined that his eyes burnt like candles, and was afraid of him, which I suppose made my looks more unstable than they would otherwise have been.

'What is all this for?' said he. 'Mistress! Robert! What is the matter here?'

'Oh, sir, our boy!' cried my mother; 'our dear boy, Mr Wringhim! Look at him, and speak to him: he is either dying or translated, sir!'

He looked at me with a countenance of great alarm; mumbling some sentences to himself, and then taking me by the arm, as if to feel my pulse, he said, with a faltering voice, 'Something has indeed befallen you, either in body or mind, boy, for you are transformed, since the morning, that I could not

have known you for the same person. Have you met with any accident?'

'No.'

'Have you seen any thing out of the ordinary course of nature?'

'No.'

'Then, Satan, I fear, has been busy with you, tempting you in no ordinary degree at this momentous crisis of your life?'

My mind turned on my associate for the day, and the idea that he might be an agent of the devil, had such an effect on me, that I could make no answer.

'I see how it is,' said he; 'you are troubled in spirit, and I have no doubt that the enemy of our salvation has been busy with you. Tell me this, has he overcome you, or has he not?'

'He has not, my dear father,' said I. 'In the strength of the Lord, I hope I have withstood him. But indeed, if he has been busy with me, I knew it not. I have been conversant this day with one stranger only, whom I took rather for an angel of light.'

'It is one of the devil's most profound wiles to appear like one,' said my mother.

'Woman, hold thy peace!' said my reverend father: 'thou pretendest to teach what thou knowest not. Tell me this, boy: Did this stranger, with whom you met, adhere to the religious principles in which I have educated you?'

'Yes, to every one of them, in their fullest latitude,' said I.

'Then he was no agent of the wicked one with whom you held converse,' said he; 'for that is the doctrine that was made to overturn the principalities and powers, the might and dominion of the kingdom of darkness.—Let us pray.'

After spending about a quarter of an hour in solemn and sublime thanksgiving, this saintly man and minister of Christ Jesus, gave out that the day following should be kept by the family as a day of solemn thanksgiving, and spent in prayer and praise, on account of the calling and election of one of its members; or rather for the election of that individual being revealed on earth, as well as confirmed in heaven.

The next day was with me a day of holy exultation. It was begun by my reverend father laying his hands upon my head and blessing me, and then dedicating me to the Lord in the most awful and impressive manner. It was in no common way that he exercised this profound rite, for it was done with all the zeal and enthusiasm of a devotee to the true cause, and a champion on the side he had espoused. He used these remarkable words, which I have still treasured up in my heart:- I give him unto Thee only, to Thee wholly, and to Thee for ever. I dedicate him unto Thee, soul, body, and spirit. Not as the wicked of this world, or the hirelings of a church profanely called by Thy name, do I dedicate this Thy servant to Thee: Not in words and form, learned by rote, and dictated by the limbs of Antichrist, but, Lord, I give him into Thy hand, as a captain putteth a sword into the hand of his sovereign, wherewith to lay waste his enemies. May he be a two-edged weapon in Thy hand, and a spear coming out of Thy mouth, to destroy, and overcome, and pass over; and may the enemies of Thy church fall down before him, and be as dung to fat the land!'

From that moment, I conceived it decreed, not that I should be a minister of the gospel, but a champion of it, to cut off the enemies of the Lord from the face of the earth; and I rejoiced in the commission, finding it more congenial to my nature to be cutting sinners off with the sword, than to be haranguing them from the pulpit, striving to produce an effect, which God, by his act of absolute predestination, had for ever rendered impracticable. The more I pondered on these things, the more I saw of the folly and inconsistency of ministers, in spending their lives, striving and remonstrating with sinners, in order to induce them to do that which they had it not in their power to do. Seeing that God had from all eternity decided the fate of every individual that was to be born of woman, how vain was it in man to endeavour to save those whom their Maker had, by an unchangeable decree, doomed to destruction. I could not disbelieve the doctrine which the best of men had taught me, and toward which he made the whole of the Scriptures to bear, and yet it made the economy of the Christian world appear to me as an absolute contradiction. How much more wise would it be, thought I, to begin and cut sinners off with the sword! for till that is effected, the saints can never inherit the earth in peace. Should I be honoured as an instrument to begin this great work of purification, I should rejoice in it. But then, where had I the means, or under what direction was I to begin? There was one thing clear, I was now the Lord's, and it behoved me to bestir myself in his service. O that I had an host at my command, then would I be as a devouring fire among the workers of iniquity!

Full of these great ideas, I hurried through the city, and sought again the private path through the field and wood of Finnieston, in which my reverend preceptor had the privilege of walking for study, and to which he had a key that was always at my command. Near one of the stiles, I perceived a young man

sitting in a devout posture, reading on a Bible. He rose, lifted his hat, and made an obeisance to me, which I returned and walked on. I had not well crossed the stile, till it struck me I knew the face of the youth, and that he was some intimate acquaintance, to whom I ought to have spoken. I walked on, and returned, and walked on again, trying to recollect who he was; but for my life I could not. There was, however, a fascination in his look and manner, that drew me back toward him in spite of myself, and I resolved to go to him, if it were merely to speak and see who he was.

I came up to him and addressed him, but he was so intent on his book, that, though I spoke, he lifted not his eyes. I looked on the book also, and still it seemed a Bible, having columns, chapters, and verses; but it was in a language of which I was wholly ignorant, and all intersected with red lines, and verses. A sensation resembling a stroke of electricity came over me, on first casting my eyes on that mysterious book, and I stood motionless. He looked up, smiled, closed his book, and put it in his bosom. 'You seem strangely affected, dear sir, by looking on my book,' said he mildly.

'In the name of God, what book is that?' said I: 'Is it a Bible?'

'It is *my* Bible, sir,' said he; 'but I will cease reading it, for I am glad to see you. Pray, is not this a day of holy festivity with you?'

I stared in his face, but made no answer, for my senses were bewildered.

'Do you not know me?' said he. 'You appear to be somehow at a loss. Had not you and I some sweet communion and fellowship yesterday?'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said I. 'But surely if you are the young gentleman with whom I spent the hours yesterday, you have the cameleon art of changing your appearance; I never could have recognized you.'

'My countenance changes with my studies and sensations,' said he. 'It is a natural peculiarity in me, over which I have not full control. If I contemplate a man's features seriously, mine own gradually assume the very same appearance and character. And what is more, by contemplating a face minutely, I not only attain the same likeness, but, with the likeness, I attain the very same ideas as well as the same mode of arranging them, so that, you see, by looking at a person attentively, I by degrees assume his likeness, and by assuming his likeness I attain to the possession of his most secret thoughts. This, I say, is a peculiarity in my nature, a gift of the God that made me; but whether or not given me for a blessing, he knows himself, and so do I. At all events, I have this privilege,—I can never be mistaken of a character in whom I am interested.'

'It is a rare qualification,' replied I, 'and I would give worlds to possess it. Then, it appears, that it is needless to dissemble with you, since you can at any time extract our most secret thoughts from our bosoms. You already know my natural character?'

'Yes,' said he, 'and it is that which attaches me to you. By assuming your likeness yesterday, I became acquainted with your character, and was no less astonished at the profundity and range of your thoughts, than at the heroic magnanimity with which these were combined. And now, in addition to these, you are dedicated to the great work of the Lord; for which reasons I have resolved to attach myself as closely to you as possible, and to render you all the service of which my poor abilities are capable.'

I confess that I was greatly flattered by these compliments paid to my abilities by a youth of such superior qualifications; by one who, with a modesty and affability rare at his age, combined a height of genius and knowledge almost above human comprehension. Nevertheless, I began to assume a certain superiority of demeanour toward him, as judging it incumbent on me to do so, in order to keep up his idea of my exalted character. We conversed again till the day was near a close; and the things that he strove most to inculcate on my mind, were the infallibility of the elect, and the pre-ordination of all things that come to pass. I pretended to controvert the first of these, for the purpose of showing him the extent of my argumentative powers, and said, that 'indubitably there were degrees of sinning which would induce the Almighty to throw off the very elect.' But behold my hitherto humble and modest companion took up the argument with such warmth, that he put me not only to silence, but to absolute shame.

'Why, sir,' said he, 'by vending such an insinuation, you put discredit on the great atonement, in which you trust. Is there not enough of merit in the blood of Jesus to save thousands of worlds, if it was for these worlds that he died? Now, when you know, as you do, (and as every one of the elect may know of himself,) that this Saviour died for you, namely and particularly, dare you say that there is not enough of merit in his great atonement to annihilate all your sins, let them be as heinous and atrocious as they may? And, moreover, do you not acknowledge that God hath preordained and decreed whatsoever comes to pass? Then, how is it that you should deem it in your power to eschew one action of your life, whether good or evil? Depend on it, the advice of the great preacher is genuine: 'What thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for none of us knows what a day may bring forth?' That is, none of us knows what is pre-ordained, but whatever is pre-ordained we *must* do, and none of these things will be laid to

our charge.'

I could hardly believe that these sayings were genuine or orthodox; but I soon felt, that, instead of being a humble disciple of mine, this new acquaintance was to be my guide and director, and all under the humble guise of one stooping at my feet to learn the right. He said that he saw I was ordained to perform some great action for the cause of Jesus and his church, and he earnestly coveted being a partaker with me; but he besought of me never to think it possible for me to fall from the truth, or the favour of him who had chosen me, else that misbelief would baulk every good work to which I set my face.

There was something so flattering in all this, that I could not resist it. Still, when he took leave of me, I felt it as a great relief; and yet, before the morrow, I wearied and was impatient to see him again. We carried on our fellowship from day to day, and all the while I knew not who he was, and still my mother and reverend father kept insisting that I was an altered youth, changed in my appearance, my manners, and my whole conduct; yet something always prevented me from telling them more about my new acquaintance than I had done on the first day we met. I rejoiced in him, was proud of him, and soon could not live without him; yet, though resolved every day to disclose the whole history of my connection with him, I had it not in my power: Something always prevented me, till at length I thought no more of it, but resolved to enjoy his fascinating company in private, and by all means to keep my own with him. The resolution was vain: I set a bold face to it, but my powers were inadequate to the task; my adherent, with all the suavity imaginable, was sure to carry his point. I sometimes fumed, and sometimes shed tears at being obliged to yield to proposals against which I had at first felt every reasoning power of my soul rise in opposition; but, for all that, he never failed in carrying conviction along with him in effect, for he either forced me to acquiesce in his measures, and assent to the truth of his positions, or he put me so completely down, that I had not a word left to advance against them.

After weeks, and I may say months of intimacy, I observed, somewhat to my amazement, that we had never once prayed together; and more than that, that he had constantly led my attentions away from that duty, causing me to neglect it wholly. I thought this a bad mark of a man seemingly so much set on inculcating certain important points of religion, and resolved next day to put him to the test, and request of him to perform that sacred duty in name of us both. He objected boldly; saying there were very few people indeed, with whom he could join in prayer, and he made a point of never doing it, as he was sure they were to ask many things of which he disapproved, and that if he were to officiate himself, he was as certain to allude to many things that came not within the range of their faith. He disapproved of prayer altogether, in the manner it was generally gone about, he said. Man made it merely a selfish concern, and was constantly employed asking, asking, for every thing. Whereas it became all God's creatures to be content with their lot, and only to kneel before him in order to thank him for such benefits as he saw meet to bestow. In short, he argued with such energy, that before we parted I acquiesced, as usual, in his position, and never mentioned prayer to him any more.

Having been so frequently seen in his company, several people happened to mention the circumstance to my mother and reverend father; but at the same time had all described him differently. At length, they began to examine me with respect to the company I kept, as I absented myself from home day after day. I told them I kept company only with one young gentleman, whose whole manner of thinking on religious subjects, I found so congenial with my own, that I could not live out of his society. My mother began to lay down some of her old hackneyed rules of faith, but I turned from hearing her with disgust; for, after the energy of my new friend's reasoning, hers appeared so tame I could not endure it. And I confess with shame, that my reverend preceptor's religious dissertations began, about this time, to lose their relish very much, and by degrees became exceedingly tiresome to my ear. They were so inferior, in strength and sublimity, to the most common observations of my young friend, that in drawing a comparison the former appeared as nothing. He, however, examined me about many things relating to my companion, in all of which I satisfied him, save in one: I could neither tell him who my friend was, what was his name, nor of whom he was descended; and I wondered at myself how I had never once adverted to such a thing, for all the time we had been intimate.

I inquired the next day what his name was; as I said I was often at a loss for it, when talking with him. He replied, that there was no occasion for any one friend ever naming another, when their society was held in private, as ours was; for his part he had never once named me since we first met, and never intended to do so, unless by my own request. 'But if you cannot converse without naming me, you may call me Gil for the present,' added he; 'and if I think proper to take another name at any future period, it shall be with your approbation.'

'Gil!' said I; 'Have you no name but Gil? Or which of your names is it? Your Christian or surname?'

'O, you must have a surname too, must you!' replied he, 'Very well, you may call me Gil-Martin. It is

not my *Christian* name; but it *is* a name which may serve your turn.'

'This is very strange!' said I. 'Are you ashamed of your parents, that you refuse to give your real name?'

'I have no parents save one, whom I do not acknowledge,' said he proudly; 'therefore, pray drop that subject, for it is a disagreeable one. I am a being of a very peculiar temper, for though I have servants and subjects more than I can number, yet, to gratify a certain whim, I have left them, and retired to this city, and for all the society it contains, you see I have attached myself only to you. This is a secret, and I tell it you only in friendship, therefore pray let it remain one, and say not another word about the matter.'

I assented, and said no more concerning it; for it instantly struck me that this was no other than the Czar Peter of Russia, having heard that he had been travelling through Europe in disguise, and I cannot say that I had not thenceforward great and mighty hopes of high preferment, as a defender and avenger of the oppressed Christian Church, under the influence of this great potentate. He had hinted as much already, as that it was more honourable, and of more avail to put down the wicked with the sword, than try to reform them, and I thought myself quite justified in supposing that he intended me for some great employment, that he had thus selected me for his companion out of all the rest in Scotland, and even pretended to learn the great truths of religion from my mouth. From that time I felt disposed to yield to such a great prince's suggestions without hesitation.

Nothing ever astonished me so much, as the uncommon powers with which he seemed invested. In our walk one day, we met with a Mr Blanchard, who was reckoned a worthy, pious divine, but quite of the moral cast, who joined us; and we three walked on, and rested together in the fields. My companion did not seem to like him, but, nevertheless, regarded him frequently with deep attention, and there were several times, while he seemed contemplating him, and trying to find out his thoughts, that his face became so like Mr Blanchard's, that it was impossible to have distinguished the one from the other. The antipathy between the two was mutual, and discovered itself quite palpably in a short time. When my companion the prince was gone, Mr Blanchard asked me anent him, and I told him that he was a stranger in the city, but a very uncommon and great personage. Mr Blanchard's answer to me was as follows: 'I never saw any body I disliked so much in my life, Mr Robert; and if it be true that he is a stranger here, which I doubt, believe me he is come for no good.'

'Do you not perceive what mighty powers of mind he is possessed of?' said I, 'and also how clear and unhesitating he is on some of the most interesting points of divinity?'

'It is for his great mental faculties that I dread him,' said he. 'It is incalculable what evil such a person as he may do, if so disposed. There is a sublimity in his ideas, with which there is to me a mixture of terror; and when he talks of religion, he does it as one that rather dreads its truths than reverences them. He, indeed, pretends great strictness of orthodoxy regarding some of the points of doctrine embraced by the reformed church; but you do not seem to perceive, that both you and he are carrying these points to a dangerous extremity. Religion is a sublime and glorious thing, the bond of society on earth, and the connector of humanity with the Divine nature; but there is nothing so dangerous to man as the wresting of any of its principles, or forcing them beyond their due bounds: this is of all others the readiest way to destruction. Neither is there any thing so easily done. There is not an error into which a man can fall, which he may not press Scripture into his service as proof of the probity of, and though your boasted theologian shunned the full discussion of the subject before me, while you pressed it, I can easily see that both you and he are carrying your ideas of absolute predestination, and its concomitant appendages, to an extent that overthrows all religion and revelation together; or, at least, jumbles them into a chaos, out of which human capacity can never select what is good. Believe me, Mr Robert, the less you associate with that illustrious stranger the better, for it appears to me that your creed and his carries damnation on the very front of it.'

I was rather stunned at this; but I pretended to smile with disdain, and said, it did not become youth to control age; and, as I knew our principles differed fundamentally, it behoved us to drop the subject. He, however, would not drop it, but took both my principles and me fearfully to task, for Blanchard was an eloquent and powerful-minded old man; and, before we parted, I believe I promised to drop my new acquaintance, and was *all but* resolved to do it.

As well might I have laid my account with shunning the light of day. He was constant to me as my shadow, and by degrees he acquired such an ascendency over me, that I never was happy out of his company, nor greatly so in it. When I repeated to him all that Mr Blanchard had said, his countenance kindled with indignation and rage; and then by degrees his eyes sunk inward, his brow lowered, so that I was awed, and withdrew my eyes from looking at him. A while afterward, as I was addressing him, I chanced to look him again in the face, and the sight of him made me start violently. He had made himself so like Mr Blanchard, that I actually believed I had been addressing that gentleman, and that I had done so in some absence of mind that I could not account for. Instead of being amused at the quandary I was

in, he seemed offended: indeed, he never was truly amused with any thing. And he then asked me sullenly, if I conceived such personages as he to have no other endowments than common mortals?

I said I never conceived that princes or potentates had any greater share of endowments than other men, and frequently not so much. He shook his head, and bade me think over the subject again; and there was an end of it. I certainly felt every day the more disposed to acknowledge such a superiority in him, and from all that I could gather, I had now no doubt that he was Peter of Russia. Every thing combined to warrant the supposition, and, of course, I resolved to act in conformity with the discovery I had made.

For several days the subject of Mr Blanchard's doubts and doctrines formed the theme of our discourse. My friend deprecated them most devoutly; and then again he would deplore them, and lament the great evil that such a man might do among the human race. I joined with him in allowing the evil in its fullest latitude; and, at length, after he thought he had fully prepared my nature for such a trial of its powers and abilities, he proposed calmly that we two should make away with Mr Blanchard. I was so shocked, that my bosom became as it were a void, and the beatings of my heart sounded loud and hollow in it; my breath cut, and my tongue and palate became dry and speechless. He mocked at my cowardice, and began a-reasoning on the matter with such powerful eloquence, that before we parted, I felt fully convinced that it was my bounden duty to slay Mr Blanchard; but my will was far, very far from consenting to the deed.

I spent the following night without sleep, or nearly so; and the next morning, by the time the sun arose, I was again abroad, and in the company of my illustrious friend. The same subject was resumed, and again he reasoned to the following purport: That supposing me placed at the head of an army of Christian soldiers, all bent on putting down the enemies of the church, would I have any hesitation in destroying and rooting out these enemies?—None surely.—Well then, when I saw and was convinced, that here was an individual who was doing more detriment to the church of Christ on earth, than tens of thousands of such warriors were capable of doing, was it not my duty to cut him off, and save the elect? 'He, who would be a champion in the cause of Christ and his Church, my brave young friend,' added he, 'must begin early, and no man can calculate to what an illustrious eminence small beginnings may lead. If the man Blanchard is worthy, he is only changing his situation for a better one; and if unworthy, it is better that one fall, than that a thousand souls perish. Let us be up and doing in our vocations. For me, my resolution is taken; I have but one great aim in this world, and I never for a moment lose sight of it.'

I was obliged to admit the force of his reasoning; for though I cannot from memory repeat his words, his eloquence was of that overpowering nature, that the subtility of other men sunk before it; and there is also little doubt that the assurance I had that these words were spoken by a great potentate, who could raise me to the highest eminence, (provided that I entered into his extensive and decisive measures,) assisted mightily in dispelling my youthful scruples and qualms of conscience; and I thought moreover, that having such a powerful back friend to support me, I hardly needed to be afraid of the consequences. I consented! But begged a little time to think of it. He said the less one thought of a duty the better; and we parted.

But the most singular instance of this wonderful man's power over my mind was, that he had as complete influence over me by night as by day. All my dreams corresponded exactly with his suggestions; and when he was absent from me, still his arguments sunk deeper in my heart than even when he was present. I dreamed that night of a great triumph obtained, and though the whole scene was but dimly and confusedly defined in my vision, yet the overthrow and death of Mr Blanchard was the first step by which I attained the eminent station I occupied. Thus, by dreaming of the event by night, and discoursing of it by day, it soon became so familiar to my mind, that I almost conceived it as done. It was resolved on: which was the first and greatest victory gained; for there was no difficulty in finding opportunities enow of cutting off a man, who, every good day, was to be found walking by himself in private grounds. I went and heard him preach for two days, and in fact I held his tenets scarcely short of blasphemy; they were such as I had never heard before, and his congregation, which was numerous, were turning up their ears and drinking in his doctrines with the utmost delight; for O, they suited their carnal natures and self-sufficiency to a hair! He was actually holding it forth, as a fact, that 'it was every man's own blame if he was not saved!' What horrible misconstruction! And then he was alleging, and trying to prove from nature and reason, that no man ever was guilty of a sinful action, who might not have declined it had he so chosen! 'Wretched controvertist!' thought I to myself an hundred times, 'shall not the sword of the Lord be moved from its place of peace for such presumptuous and absurd testimonies as these!'

When I began to tell the prince about these false doctrines, to my astonishment I found that he had been in the church himself, and had every argument that the old divine had used *verbatim*; and he remarked on them with great concern, that these were not the tenets that corresponded with his views in

society, and that he had agents in every city, and every land, exerting their powers to put them down. I asked, with great simplicity, ‘Are all your subjects Christians, prince?’

‘All my European subjects are, or deem themselves so,’ returned he; ‘and they are the most faithful and true subjects I have.’

Who could doubt, after this, that he was the Czar of Russia? I have nevertheless had reasons to doubt of his identity since that period, and which of my conjectures is right, I believe the God of heaven only knows, for I do not. I shall go on to write such things as I remember, and if any one shall ever take the trouble to read over these confessions, such a one will judge for himself. It will be observed, that since ever I fell in with this extraordinary person, I have written about him only, and I must continue to do so to the end of this memoir, as I have performed no great or interesting action in which he had not a principal share.

He came to me one day and said, ‘We must not linger thus in executing what we have resolved on. We have much before our hands to perform for the benefit of mankind, both civil as well as religious. Let us do what we have to do here, and then we must wend our way to other cities, and perhaps to other countries. Mr Blanchard is to hold forth in the high church of Paisley on Sunday next, on some particularly great occasion: this must be defeated; he must not go there. As he will be busy arranging his discourses, we may expect him to be walking by himself in Finnieston Dell the greater part of Friday and Saturday. Let us go and cut him off. What is the life of a man more than the life of a lamb, or any guiltless animal? It is not half so much, especially when we consider the immensity of the mischief this old fellow is working among our fellow-creatures. Can there be any doubt that it is the duty of one consecrated to God, to cut off such a mildew?’

‘I fear me, great sovereign,’ said I, ‘that your ideas of retribution are too sanguine, and too arbitrary for the laws of this country. I dispute not that your motives are great and high; but have you debated the consequences, and settled the result?’

‘I have,’ returned he, ‘and hold myself amenable for the action, to the laws of God and of equity; as to the enactments of men I despise them. Fain would I see the weapon of the Lord of Hosts, begin the work of vengeance that awaits it to do!’

I could not help thinking, that I perceived a little derision of countenance on his face as he said this, nevertheless I sunk dumb before such a man, and aroused myself to the task, seeing he would not have it deferred. I approved of it in theory, but my spirit stood aloof from the practice. I saw and was convinced that the elect of God would be happier, and purer, were the wicked and unbelievers all cut off from troubling and misleading them, but if it had not been the instigations of this illustrious stranger, I should never have presumed to begin so great a work myself. Yet, though he often aroused my zeal to the highest pitch, still my heart at times shrunk from the shedding of life-blood, and it was only at the earnest and unceasing instigations of my enlightened and voluntary patron, that I at length put my hand to the conclusive work. After I said all that I could say, and all had been overborne, (I remember my actions and words as well as it had been yesterday,) I turned round hesitatingly, and looked up to Heaven for direction; but there was a dimness came over my eyes that I could not see. The appearance was as if there had been a veil drawn over me, so nigh that I put up my hand to feel it; and then Gil-Martin (as this great sovereign was pleased to have himself called,) frowned, and asked me what I was grasping at? I knew not what to say, but answered, with fear and shame, ‘I have no weapons, not one; nor know I where any are to be found.’

‘The God whom thou servest will provide these,’ said he; ‘if thou provest worthy of the trust committed to thee.’

I looked again up into the cloudy veil that covered us, and thought I beheld golden weapons of every description let down in it, but all with their points towards me. I kneeled, and was going to stretch out my hand to take one, when my patron seized me, as I thought, by the clothes, and dragged me away with as much ease as I had been a lamb, saying, with a joyful and elevated voice,—‘Come, my friend, let us depart: thou art dreaming—thou art dreaming. Rouse up all the energies of thy exalted mind, for thou art an highly-favoured one; and doubt thou not, that he whom *thou* servest, will be ever at thy right and left hand, to direct and assist thee.’

These words, but particularly the vision I had seen, of the golden weapons descending out of Heaven, inflamed my zeal to that height that I was as one beside himself; which my parents perceived that night, and made some motions toward confining me to my room. I joined in the family prayers, and then I afterwards sung a psalm and prayed by myself; and I had good reasons for believing that that small oblation of praise and prayer was not turned to sin. But there are strange things, and unaccountable agencies in nature: He only who dwells between the Cherubim can unriddle them, and to him the honour must redound for ever. *Amen.*

I felt greatly strengthened and encouraged that night, and the next morning I ran to meet my companion, out of whose eye I had now no life. He rejoiced at seeing me so forward in the great work of reformation by blood, and said many things to raise my hopes of future fame and glory; and then, producing two pistols of pure beaten gold, he held them out and proffered me the choice of one, saying, 'See what thy master hath provided thee!' I took one of them eagerly, for I perceived at once that they were two of the very weapons that were let down from Heaven in the cloudy veil, the dim tapestry of the firmament; and I said to myself, 'Surely this is the will of the Lord.'

The little splendid and enchanting piece was so perfect, so complete, and so ready for executing the will of the donor, that I now longed to use it in his service. I loaded it with my own hand, as Gil-Martin did the other, and we took our stations behind a bush of hawthorn and bramble on the verge of the wood, and almost close to the walk. My patron was so acute in all his calculations that he never mistook an event. We had not taken our stand above a minute and a half, till old Mr Blanchard appeared, coming slowly on the path. When we saw this, we cowered down, and leaned each of us a knee upon the ground, pointing the pistols through the bush, with an aim so steady, that it was impossible to miss our victim.

He came deliberately on, pausing at times so long, that we dreaded he was going to turn. Gil-Martin dreaded it, and I said I did, but wished in my heart that he might. He, however, came onward, and I will never forget the manner in which he came! No—I don't believe I ever can forget it, either in the narrow bounds of time or the ages of eternity! He was a boardly ill-shaped man, of a rude exterior, and a little bent with age; his hands were clasped behind his back, and below his coat, and he walked with a slow swinging air that was very peculiar. When he paused and looked abroad on nature, the act was highly impressive: he seemed conscious of being all alone, and conversant only with God and the elements of his creation. Never was there such a picture of human inadvertency! a man approaching step by step to the one that was to hurl him out of one existence into another, with as much ease and indifference as the ox goeth to the stall. Hideous vision, wilt thou not be gone from my mental sight! If not, let me bear with thee as I can!

When he came straight opposite to the muzzles of our pieces, Gil-Martin called out 'Eh!' with a short quick sound. The old man, without starting, turned his face and breast toward us, and looked into the wood, but looked over our heads. 'Now!' whispered my companion, and fired. But my hand refused the office, for I was not at that moment sure about becoming an assassin in the cause of Christ and his Church. I thought I heard a sweet voice behind me, whispering me to beware, and I was going to look round, when my companion exclaimed, 'Coward, we are ruined!'

I had no time for an alternative: Gil-Martin's ball had not taken effect, which was altogether wonderful, as the old man's breast was within a few yards of him. 'Hilloa!' cried Blanchard; 'what is that for, you dog!' and with that he came forward to look over the bush. I hesitated, as I said, and attempted to look behind me; but there was no time: the next step discovered two assassins lying in covert, waiting for blood. 'Coward, we are ruined!' cried my indignant friend; and that moment my piece was discharged. The effect was as might have been expected: the old man first stumbled to one side, and then fell on his back. We kept our places, and I perceived my companion's eyes gleaming with an unnatural joy. The wounded man raised himself from the bank to a sitting posture, and I beheld his eyes swimming; he, however, appeared sensible, for we heard him saying in a low and rattling voice, 'Alas, alas! whom have I offended, that they should have been driven to an act like this! Come forth and shew yourselves, that I may either forgive you before I die, or curse you in the name of the Lord.' He then fell a-groping with both hands on the ground, as if feeling for something he had lost, manifestly in the agonies of death; and, with a solemn and interrupted prayer for forgiveness, he breathed his last.

I had become rigid as a statue, whereas my associate appeared to be elevated above measure. 'Arise, thou fainthearted one, and let us be going,' said he. 'Thou hast done well for once; but wherefore hesitate in such a cause? This is but a small beginning of so great a work as that of purging the Christian world. But the first victim is a worthy one, and more of such lights must be extinguished immediately.'

We touched not our victim, nor any thing pertaining to him, for fear of staining our hands with his blood; and the firing having brought three men within view, who were hasting towards the spot, my undaunted companion took both the pistols, and went forward as with intent to meet them, bidding me shift for myself. I ran off in a contrary direction, till I came to the foot of the Pearman Sike, and then, running up the hollow of that, I appeared on the top of the bank as if I had been another man brought in view by hearing the shots in such a place. I had a full view of a part of what passed, though not of all. I saw my companion going straight to meet the men, apparently with a pistol in every hand, waving in a careless manner. They seemed not quite clear of meeting with him, and so he went straight on, and passed between them. They looked after him, and came onward; but when they came to the old man lying stretched in his blood, then they turned and pursued my companion, though not so quickly as they

might have done; and I understood that from the first they saw no more of him.

Great was the confusion that day in Glasgow. The most popular of all their preachers of morality was (what they called) murdered in cold blood, and a strict and extensive search was made for the assassin. Neither of the accomplices was found, however, that is certain, nor was either of them so much as suspected; but another man was apprehended under circumstances that warranted suspicion.—This was one of the things that I witnessed in my life, which I never understood, and it surely was one of my patron's most dexterous tricks, for I must still say, what I have thought from the beginning, that like him there never was a man created. The young man who was taken up was a preacher; and it was proved that he had purchased fire arms in town, and gone out with them that morning. But the far greatest mystery of the whole was, that two of the men, out of the three who met my companion, swore, that that unfortunate preacher was the man whom they met with a pistol in each hand, fresh from the death of the old divine. The poor fellow made a confused speech himself, which there is not the least doubt was quite true; but it was laughed to scorn, and an expression of horror ran through both the hearers and jury. I heard the whole trial, and so did Gil-Martin; but we left the journeyman preacher to his fate, and from that time forth I have had no faith in the justice of criminal trials. If once a man is prejudiced on one side, he will swear any thing in support of such prejudice. I tried to expostulate with my mysterious friend on the horrid injustice of suffering this young man to die for our act, but the prince exulted in it more than the other, and said the latter was the most dangerous man of the two.

The alarm in and about Glasgow was prodigious. The country being divided into two political parties, the court and the country party, the former held meetings, issued proclamations, and offered rewards, ascribing all to the violence of party spirit, and deprecating the infernal measures of their opponents. I did not understand their political differences; but it was easy to see that the true Gospel preachers joined all on one side, and the upholders of pure morality and a blameless life on the other, so that this division proved a test to us, and it was forthwith resolved, that we two should pick out some of the leading men of this unsaintly and heterodox cabal, and cut them off one by one, as occasion should suit.

Now, the ice being broke, I felt considerable zeal in our great work, but pretended much more; and we might soon have kidnapped them all through the ingenuity of my patron, had not our next attempt miscarried, by some awkwardness or mistake of mine. The consequence was, that he was discovered fairly, and very nigh seized. I also was seen, and suspected so far, that my reverend father, my mother, and myself were examined privately. I denied all knowledge of the matter; and they held it in such a ridiculous light, and their conviction of the complete groundlessness of the suspicion was so perfect, that their testimony prevailed, and the affair was hushed. I was obliged, however, to walk circumspectly, and saw my companion the prince very seldom, who was prowling about every day, quite unconcerned about his safety. He was every day a new man, however, and needed not to be alarmed at any danger; for such a facility had he in disguising himself, that if it had not been for a pass-word which we had between us, for the purposes of recognition, I never could have known him myself.

It so happened that my reverend father was called to Edinburgh about this time, to assist with his council in settling the national affairs. At my earnest request I was permitted to accompany him, at which both my associate and I rejoiced, as we were now about to move in a new and extensive field. All this time I never knew where my illustrious friend resided. He never once invited me to call on him at his lodgings, nor did he ever come to our house, which made me sometimes to suspect, that if any of our great efforts in the cause of true religion were discovered, he intended leaving me in the lurch. Consequently, when we met in Edinburgh (for we travelled not in company) I proposed to go with him to look for lodgings, telling him at the same time what a blessed religious family my reverend instructor and I were settled in. He said he rejoiced at it, but he made a rule of never lodging in any particular house, but took these daily, or hourly, as he found it convenient, and that he never was at a loss in any circumstance.

'What a mighty trouble you put yourself to, great sovereign!' said I, 'and all, it would appear, for the purpose of seeing and knowing more and more of the human race.'

'I never go but where I have some great purpose to serve,' returned he, 'either in the advancement of my own power and dominion, or in thwarting my enemies.'

'With all due deference to your great comprehension, my illustrious friend,' said I, 'it strikes me that you can accomplish very little either the one way or the other here, in the humble and private capacity you are pleased to occupy.'

'It is your own innate modesty that prompts such a remark,' said he. 'Do you think the gaining of *you* to my service, is not an attainment worthy of being envied by the greatest potentate in Christendom? Before I had missed such a prize as the attainment of your services, I would have travelled over one half of the habitable globe.'—I bowed with great humility, but at the same time how could I but feel proud and

highly flattered? He continued. ‘Believe me, my dear friend, for such a prize I account no effort too high. For a man who is not only dedicated to the King of Heaven, in the most solemn manner, soul, body, and spirit, but also chosen of him from the beginning, justified, sanctified, and received into a communion that never shall be broken, and from which no act of his shall ever remove him,—the possession of such a man, I tell you, is worth kingdoms; because every deed that he performs, he does it with perfect safety to himself and honour to me.’—I bowed again, lifting my hat, and he went on.—‘I am now going to put his courage in the cause he has espoused, to a severe test—to a trial at which common nature would revolt, but he who is dedicated to be the sword of the Lord, must raise himself above common humanity. You have a father and a brother according to the flesh, what do you know of them?’

‘I am sorry to say I know nothing good,’ said I. ‘They are reprobates, cast-aways, beings devoted to the wicked one, and, like him, workers of every species of iniquity with greediness.’

‘They must both fall!’ said he, with a sigh and melancholy look: ‘It is decreed in the councils above, that they must both fall by your hand.’

‘The God of heaven forbid it!’ said I. ‘They are enemies to Christ and his church, that I know and believe; but they shall live and die in their iniquity for me, and reap their guerdon when their time cometh. There my hand shall not strike.’

‘The feeling is natural, and amiable,’ said he: ‘but you *must* think again. Whether are the bonds of carnal nature, or the bonds and vows of the Lord, strongest?’

‘I will not reason with you on this head, mighty potentate,’ said I, ‘for whenever I do so it is but to be put down. I shall only express my determination, not to take vengeance out of the Lord’s hand in this instance. It availeth not. These are men that have the mark of the beast in their foreheads and right hands; they are lost beings themselves, but have no influence over others. Let them perish in their sins; for they shall not be meddled with by me.’

‘How preposterously you talk, my dear friend!’ said he. ‘These people are your greatest enemies; they would rejoice to see you annihilated. And now that you have taken up the Lord’s cause of being avenged on *his* enemies, wherefore spare those that are your own as well as his? Besides, you ought to consider what great advantages would be derived to the cause of righteousness and truth, were the estate and riches of that opulent house in your possession, rather than in that of such as oppose the truth and all manner of holiness.’

This was a portion of the consequence of following my illustrious adviser’s summary mode of procedure, that had never entered into my calculation—I disclaimed all idea of being influenced by it; however, I cannot but say that the desire of being enabled to do so much good, by the possession of these bad men’s riches, made some impression on my heart, and I said I would consider of the matter. I did consider it, and that right seriously as well as frequently; and there was scarcely an hour in the day on which my resolves were not animated by my great friend, till at length I began to have a longing desire to kill my brother, in particular. Should any man ever read this scroll, he will wonder at this confession, and deem it savage and unnatural. So it appeared to me at first, but a constant thinking of an event changes every one of its features. I have done all for the best, and as *I* was prompted, by one who knew right and wrong much better that I did. I *had* a desire to slay him, it is true, and such a desire too as a thirsty man has to drink; but at the same time, this longing desire was mingled with a certain terror, as if I had dreaded that the drink for which I longed was mixed with deadly poison. My mind was so much weakened, or rather softened about this time, that my faith began a little to give way, and I doubted most presumptuously of the least tangible of all Christian tenets, namely, of *the infallibility of the elect*. I hardly comprehended the great work I had begun, and doubted of *my own* infallibility, or that of any created being. But I was brought over again by the unwearied diligence of my friend to repent of my backsliding, and view once more the superiority of the Almighty’s counsels in its fullest latitude. *Amen*.

I prayed very much in secret about this time, and that with great fervor of spirit, as well as humility; and my satisfaction at finding all my requests granted is not to be expressed.

My illustrious friend still continuing to sound in my ears the imperious duty to which I was called, of making away with my sinful relations, and quoting many parallel actions out of the Scriptures, and the writings of the holy Fathers, of the pleasure the Lord took in such as executed his vengeance on the wicked, I was obliged to acquiesce in his measures, though with certain limitations. It was not easy to answer his arguments, and yet I was afraid that he soon perceived a leaning to his will on my part. ‘If the acts of Jehu, in rooting out the whole house of his master, were ordered and approved of by the Lord,’ said he, ‘would it not have been more praiseworthy if one of Ahab’s own sons had stood up for the cause of the God of Israel, and rooted out the sinners and their idols out of the land?’

‘It would certainly,’ said I. ‘To our duty to God all other duties must yield.’

‘Go thou then and do likewise,’ said he. ‘Thou art called to a high vocation; to cleanse the sanctuary of

thy God in this thy native land by the shedding of blood; go thou forth then like a ruling energy, a master spirit of desolation in the dwellings of the wicked, and high shall be your reward both here and hereafter.'

My heart now panted with eagerness to look my brother in the face: On which my companion, who was never out of the way, conducted me to a small square in the suburbs of the city, where there were a number of young noblemen and gentlemen playing at a vain, idle, and sinful game, at which there was much of the language of the accursed going on; and among these blasphemers he instantly pointed out my brother to me. I was fired with indignation at seeing him in such company, and so employed; and I placed myself close beside him to watch all his motions, listen to his words, and draw inferences from what I saw and heard. In what a sink of sin was he wallowing! I resolved to take him to task, and if he refused to be admonished, to inflict on him some condign punishment; and knowing that my illustrious friend and director was looking on, I resolved to show some spirit. Accordingly, I waited until I heard him profane his Maker's name three times, and then, my spiritual indignation being roused above all restraint, I went up and kicked him. Yes, I went boldly up and struck him with my foot, and meant to have given him a more severe blow than it was my fortune to inflict. It had, however, the effect of rousing up his corrupt nature to quarrelling and strife, instead of taking the chastisement of the Lord in humility and meekness. He ran furiously against me in the choler that is always inspired by the wicked one; but I overthrew him, by reason of impeding the natural and rapid progress of his unholy feet, running to destruction. I also fell slightly; but his fall proving a severe one, he arose in wrath, and struck me with the mall which he held in his hand, until my blood flowed copiously; and from that moment I vowed his destruction in my heart. But I chanced to have no weapon at that time, nor any means of inflicting due punishment on the caitiff, which would not have been returned double on my head, by him and his graceless associates. I mixed among them at the suggestion of my friend, and following them to their den of voluptuousness and sin, I strove to be admitted among them, in hopes of finding some means of accomplishing my great purpose, while I found myself moved by the spirit within me so to do. But I was not only debarred, but, by the machinations of my wicked brother and his associates, cast into prison.

I was not sorry at being thus honoured to suffer in the cause of righteousness, and at the hands of sinful men; and as soon as I was alone, I betook myself to prayer, deprecating the long-suffering of God toward such horrid sinners. My jailer came to me, and insulted me. He was a rude unprincipled fellow, partaking much of the loose and carnal manners of the age; but I remembered of having read, in the Cloud of Witnesses, of such men formerly, having been converted by the imprisoned saints; so I set myself, with all my heart, to bring about this man's repentance and reformation.

'Fat the deil are ye yoolling an' praying that gate for man?' said he, coming angrily in. 'I thought the days o' praying prisoners had been a' ower. We had rowth o' them aince; an' they were the poorest an' the blackest bargains that ever poor jailers saw. Gie up your crooning, or I'll pit you to an in-by place, where ye sall get plenty o't.'

'Friend,' said I, 'I am making my appeal at that bar where all human actions are seen and judged, and where you shall not be forgot, sinful as you are. Go in peace, and let me be.'

'Hae ye naebody nearer-hand hame to mak your appeal to, man?' said he; 'because an ye haena, I dread you an' me may be unco weel acquaintit by an' by?'

I then opened up the mysteries of religion to him in a clear and perspicuous manner, but particularly the great doctrine of the election of grace; and then I added, 'Now, friend, you must tell me if you pertain to this chosen number. It is in every man's power to ascertain this, and it is every man's duty to do it.'

'An' fat the better wad you be for the kenning o' this, man?' said he.

'Because, if you are one of my brethren, I will take you into sweet communion and fellowship,' returned I; 'but if you belong to the unregenerate, I have a commission to slay you.'

'The deil you hae, callant!' said he, gaping and laughing. 'An' pray now, fa was it that gae you siccan a braw commission?'

'My commission is sealed by the signet above,' said I, 'and that I will let you and all sinners know. I am dedicated to it by the most solemn vows and engagements. I am the sword of the Lord, and Famine and Pestilence are my sisters. Wo then to the wicked of this land, for they must fall down dead together, that the church may be purified!'

'Oo, foo, foo! I see how it is,' said he; 'yours is a very braw commission, but you will have the small opportunity of carrying it through here. Take my advising, and write a bit of a letter to your friends, and I will send it, for this is no place for such a great man. If you cannot steady your hand to write, as I see you have been at your great work, a word of a mouth may do; for I do assure you this is not the place at all, of any in the world, for your operations.'

The man apparently thought I was deranged in my intellect. He could not swallow such great truths at the first morsel. So I took his advice, and sent a line to my reverend father, who was not long in coming, and great was the jailer's wonderment when he saw all the great Christian noblemen of the land sign my bond of freedom.

My reverend father took this matter greatly to heart, and bestirred himself in the good cause till the transgressors were ashamed to shew their faces. My illustrious companion was not idle: I wondered that he came not to me in prison, nor at my release; but he was better employed, in stirring up the just to the execution of God's decrees: and he succeeded so well, that my brother and all his associates had nearly fallen victims to their wrath: But many were wounded, bruised, and imprisoned, and much commotion prevailed in the city. For my part, I was greatly strengthened in my resolution by the anathemas of my reverend father, who, privately, (that is in a family capacity,) in his prayers, gave up my father and brother, according to the flesh, to Satan, making it plain to all my senses of perception, that they were beings given up of God, to be devoured by fiends or men, at their will and pleasure, and that *whosoever* should slay them, would do God good service.

The next morning my illustrious friend met me at an early hour, and he was greatly overjoyed at hearing my sentiments now chime so much in unison with his own. I said, 'I longed for the day and the hour that I might look my brother in the face at Gilgal, and visit on him the iniquity of his father and himself, for that I was now strengthened and prepared for the deed.'

'I have been watching the steps and movements of the profligate one,' said he; 'and lo, I will take you straight to his presence. Let your heart be as the heart of the lion, and your arms strong as the shekels of brass, and swift to avenge as the bolt that descendeth from Heaven, for the blood of the just and the good hath long flowed in Scotland. But already is the day of their avengement begun; the hero is at length arisen, who shall send all such as bear enmity to the true church, or trust in works of their own, to Tophet!'

Thus encouraged, I followed my friend, who led me directly to the same court in which I had chastised the miscreant on the foregoing day; and behold, there was the same group again assembled. They eyed me with terror in their looks, as I walked among them and eyed them with looks of disapprobation and rebuke; and I saw that the very eye of a chosen one lifted on these children of Belial, was sufficient to dismay and put them to flight. I walked aside to my friend, who stood at a distance looking on, and he said to me, 'What thinkest thou now?' and I answered in the words of the venal prophet, 'Lo now, if I had a sword into mine hand, I would even kill him.'

'Wherefore lackest thou it?' said he. 'Dost thou not see that they tremble at thy presence, knowing that the avenger of blood is among them.'

My heart was lifted up on hearing this, and again I strode into the midst of them, and eyeing them with threatening looks, they were so much confounded, that they abandoned their sinful pastime, and fled every one to his house!

This was a palpable victory gained over the wicked, and I thereby knew that the hand of the Lord was with me. My companion also exulted, and said, 'Did not I tell thee? Behold thou dost not know one half of thy might, or of the great things thou art destined to do. Come with me and I will show thee more than this, for these young men cannot subsist without the exercises of sin. I listened to their councils, and I know where they will meet again.'

Accordingly he led me a little farther to the south, and we walked aside till by degrees we saw some people begin to assemble; and in a short time we perceived the same group stripping off their clothes to make them more expert in the practice of madness and folly. Their game was begun before we approached, and so also were the oaths and cursing. I put my hands in my pockets, and walked with dignity and energy into the midst of them. It was enough: Terror and astonishment seized them. A few of them cried out against me, but their voices were soon hushed amid the murmurs of fear. One of them, in the name of the rest, then came and besought of me to grant them liberty to amuse themselves; but I refused peremptorily, dared the whole multitude so much as to touch me with one of their fingers, and dismissed them in the name of the Lord.

Again they all fled and dispersed at my eye, and I went home in triumph, escorted by my friend, and some well-meaning young Christians, who, however, had not learned to deport themselves with soberness and humility. But my ascendency over my enemies was great indeed; for wherever I appeared I was hailed with approbation, and herever my guilty brother made his appearance, he was hooted and held in derision, till he was forced to hide his disgraceful head, and appear no more in public.

Immediately after this I was seized with a strange distemper, which neither my friends nor physicians could comprehend, and it confined me to my chamber for many days; but I knew, myself, that I was bewitched, and suspected my father's reputed concubine of the deed. I told my fears to my reverend

protector, who hesitated concerning them, but I knew by his words and looks that he was conscious I was right. I generally conceived myself to be two people. When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it; when I sat up, I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me towards my left side. It mattered not how many or how few were present: this my second self was sure to be present in his place; and this occasioned a confusion in all my words and ideas that utterly astounded my friends, who all declared, that instead of being deranged in my intellect, they had never heard my conversation manifest so much energy or sublimity of conception; but for all that, over the singular delusion that I was two persons, my reasoning faculties had no power. The most perverse part of it was, that I rarely conceived *myself* to be any of the two persons. I thought for the most part that my companion was one of them, and my brother the other; and I found, that to be obliged to speak and answer in the character of another man, was a most awkward business at the long run.

Who can doubt, from this statement, that I was bewitched, and that my relatives were at the ground of it? The constant and unnatural persuasion that I was my brother, proved it to my own satisfaction, and must, I think, do so to every unprejudiced person. This victory of the wicked one over me kept me confined in my chamber, at Mr Millar's house, for nearly a month, until the prayers of the faithful prevailed, and I was restored. I knew it was a chastisement for my pride, because my heart was lifted up at my superiority over the enemies of the church; nevertheless, I determined to make short work with the aggressor, that the righteous might not be subjected to the effect of his diabolical arts again.

I say I was confined a month. I beg he that readeth to take note of this, that he may estimate how much the word, or even the oath, of a wicked man, is to depend on. For a month I saw no one but such as came into my room, and for all that, it will be seen, that there were plenty of the same set to attest upon oath that I saw my brother every day during that period; that I persecuted him with my presence day and night, while all the time I never saw his face, save in a delusive dream. I cannot comprehend what manoeuvres my illustrious friend was playing off with them about this time; for he, having the art of personating whom he chose, had peradventure deceived them, else so many of them had never all attested the same thing. I never saw any man so steady in his friendships and attentions as he; but as he made a rule of never calling at private houses, for fear of some discovery being made of his person, so I never saw him while my malady lasted; but as soon as I grew better, I knew I had nothing ado but to attend at some of our places of meeting, to see him again. He was punctual, as usual, and I had not to wait.

My reception was precisely as I apprehended. There was no flaring, no flummery, nor bombastical pretensions, but a dignified return to my obeisance, and an immediate recurrence, in converse, to the important duties incumbent on us, in our stations, as reformers and purifiers of the Church.

'I have marked out a number of most dangerous characters in this city,' said he, 'all of whom must be cut off from cumbering the true vineyard before we leave this land. And if you bestir not yourself in the work to which you are called, I must raise up others who shall have the honour of it.'

'I am, most illustrious prince, wholly at your service,' said I. 'Show but what ought to be done, and here is the heart to dare, and the hand to execute. You pointed out my relations, according to the flesh, as brands fitted to be thrown into the burning. I approve peremptorily of the award; nay, I thirst to accomplish it; for I myself have suffered severely from their diabolical arts. When once that trial of my devotion to the faith is accomplished, then be your future operations disclosed.'

'You are free of your words and promises,' said he.

'So will I be of my deeds in the service of my master, and that shalt thou see,' said I. 'I lack not the spirit, nor the will, but I lack experience wofully; and because of that shortcoming, must bow to your suggestions.'

'Meet me here to-morrow betimes,' said he, 'and perhaps you may hear of some opportunity of displaying your zeal in the cause of righteousness.'

I met him as he desired me; and he addressed me with a hurried and joyful expression, telling me that my brother was astir, and that a few minutes ago he had seen him pass on his way to the mountain. 'The hill is wrapped in a cloud,' added he, 'and never was there such an opportunity of executing divine justice on a guilty sinner. You may trace him in the dew, and shall infallibly find him on the top of some precipice; for it is only in secret that he dares show his debased head to the sun.'

'I have no arms, else assuredly I would pursue him and discomfit him,' said I.

'Here is a small dagger,' said he: 'I have nothing of weapon-kind about me save that, but it is a potent one; and should you require it, there is nothing more ready or sure.'

'Will not you accompany me?' said I: 'Sure you will?'

'I will be with you, or near you,' said he. 'Go you on before.'

I hurried away as he directed me, and imprudently asked some of Queensberry's guards if such and such a young man passed by them going out from the city. I was answered in the affirmative, and till then had doubted of my friend's intelligence, it was so inconsistent with a profligate's life to be so early astir. When I got the certain intelligence that my brother was before me, I fell a-running, scarcely knowing what I did; and looking several times behind me, I perceived nothing of my zealous and arbitrary friend. The consequence of this was, that by the time I reached St Anthony's well, my resolution began to give way. It was not my courage, for now that I had once shed blood in the cause of the true faith, I was exceedingly bold and ardent; but whenever I was left to myself, I was subject to sinful doubtings. These always hankered on one point: I doubted if the elect were infallible, and if the Scripture promises to them were binding in all situations and relations. I confess this, and that it was a sinful and shameful weakness in me, but my nature was subject to it, and I could not eschew it. I never doubted that I was one of the elect myself; for, besides the strong inward and spiritual conviction that I possessed, I had my kind father's assurance; and these had been revealed to him in that way and measure that they could not be doubted.

In this desponding state, I sat myself down on a stone, and bethought me of the rashness of my understanding. I tried to ascertain, to my own satisfaction, whether or not I really had been commissioned of God to perpetrate these crimes in his behalf, for in the eyes, and by the laws of men, they were great and crying transgressions. While I sat pondering on these things, I was involved in a veil of white misty vapour, and looking up to heaven, I was just about to ask direction from above, when I heard as it were a still small voice close by me, which uttered some words of derision and chiding. I looked intensely in the direction whence it seemed to come, and perceived a lady, robed in white, who hasted toward me. She regarded me with a severity of look and gesture that appalled me so much, I could not address her; but she waited not for that, but coming close to my side, said, without stopping, 'Preposterous wretch! how dare you lift your eyes to heaven with such purposes in your heart? Escape homeward, and save your soul, or farewell for ever!'

These were all the words that she uttered, as far as I could ever recollect, but my spirits were kept in such a tumult that morning, that something might have escaped me. I followed her eagerly with my eyes, but in a moment she glided over the rocks above the holy well, and vanished. I persuaded myself that I had seen a vision, and that the radiant being that had addressed me was one of the good angels, or guardian spirits, commissioned by the Almighty to watch over the steps of the just. My first impulse was to follow her advice, and make my escape home; for I thought to myself, 'How is this interested and mysterious foreigner, a proper judge of the actions of a free Christian?'

The thought was hardly framed, nor had I moved in a retrograde direction six steps, when I saw my illustrious friend and great adviser descending the ridge towards me with hasty and impassioned strides. My heart fainted within me; and when he came up and addressed me, I looked as one caught in a trespass. 'What hath detained thee, thou desponding trifler?' said he. 'Verily now shall the golden opportunity be lost which may never be recalled. I have traced the reprobate to his sanctuary in the cloud, and lo he is perched on the pinnacle of a precipice an hundred fathoms high. One ketch with thy foot, or toss with thy finger, shall throw him from thy sight into the foldings of the cloud, and he shall be no more seen, till found at the bottom of the cliff dashed to pieces. Make haste therefore, thou loiterer, if thou wouldst ever prosper and rise to eminence in the work of thy Lord and master.'

'I go no farther on this work,' said I, 'for I have seen a vision that has reprimanded the deed.'

'A vision?' said he: 'Was it that wench who descended from the hill?'

'The being that spake to me, and warned me of my danger, was indeed in the form of a lady,' said I.

'She also approached me and said a few words,' returned he; 'and I thought there was something mysterious in her manner. Pray, what did she say? for the words of such a singular message, and from such a messenger, ought to be attended to. If I understood her aright, she was chiding us for our misbelief and preposterous delay.'

I recited her words, but he answered that I had been in a state of sinful doubting at the time, and it was to these doubtings she had adverted. In short, this wonderful and clear-sighted stranger soon banished all my doubts and despondency, making me utterly ashamed of them, and again I set out with him in the pursuit of my brother. He showed me the traces of his footsteps in the dew, and pointed out the spot where I should find him. 'You have nothing more to do than go softly down behind him,' said he; 'which you can do to within an ell of him, without being seen; then rush upon him, and throw him from his seat, where there is neither footing nor hold. I will go, meanwhile, and amuse his sight by some exhibition in the contrary direction, and he shall neither know nor perceive who has done him this *kind office*: for, exclusive of more weighty concerns, be assured of this, that the sooner he falls, the fewer crimes will he have to answer for, and his estate in the other world will be proportionally more tolerable, than if he

spent a long unregenerate life steeped in iniquity to the loathing of the soul.'

'Nothing can be more plain or more pertinent,' said I: 'therefore I fly to perform that which is both a duty toward God and toward man!'

'You shall yet rise to great honour and preferment,' said he.

'I value it not, provided I do honour and justice to the cause of my master here,' said I.

'You shall be lord of your father's riches and demesnes,' added he.

'I disclaim and deride every selfish motive thereto relating,' said I, 'farther than as it enables me to do good.'

'Ay, but that is a great and a heavenly consideration, that *longing for ability to do good*,' said he;—and as he said so, I could not help remarking a certain derisive exultation of expression which I could not comprehend; and indeed I have noted this very often in my illustrious friend, and sometimes mentioned it civilly to him, but he has never failed to disclaim it. On this occasion I said nothing, but concealing his poniard in my clothes, I hasted up the mountain, determined to execute my purpose before any misgivings should again visit me; and I never had more ado, than in keeping firm my resolution. I could not help my thoughts, and there are certain trains and classes of thoughts that have great power in enervating the mind. I thought of the awful thing of plunging a fellow creature from the top of a cliff into the dark and misty void below—of his being dashed to pieces on the protruding rocks, and of hearing his shrieks as he descended the cloud, and beheld the shagged points on which he was to alight. Then I thought of plunging a soul so abruptly into hell, or, at the best, sending it to hover on the confines of that burning abyss—of its appearance at the bar of the Almighty to receive its sentence. And then I thought, 'Will there not be a sentence pronounced against me there, by a jury of the just made perfect, and written down in the registers of heaven?'

These thoughts, I say, came upon me unasked, and instead of being able to dispel them, they mustered, upon the summit of my imagination, in thicker and stronger array: and there was another that impressed me in a very particular manner, though, I have reason to believe, not so strongly as those above written. It was this: 'What if I should fail in my first effort? Will the consequence not be that I am tumbled from the top of the rock myself?' and then all the feelings anticipated, with regard to both body and soul, must happen to me! This was a spine-breaking reflection; and yet, though the probability was rather on that side, my zeal in the cause of godliness was such that it carried me on, maugre all danger and dismay.

I soon came close upon my brother, sitting on the dizzy pinnacle, with his eyes fixed stedfastly in the direction opposite to me. I descended the little green ravine behind him with my feet foremost, and every now and then raised my head, and watched his motions. His posture continued the same, until at last I came so near him I could have heard him breathe, if his face had been towards me. I laid my cap aside, and made me ready to spring upon him, and push him over. I could not for my life accomplish it! I do not think it was that *I durst not*, for I have always felt my courage equal to any thing in a good cause. But I had not the heart, or something that I ought to have had. In short, it was not done in time, as it easily might have been. These THOUGHTS are hard enemies wherewith to combat! And I was so grieved that I could not effect my righteous purpose, that I laid me down on my face and shed tears. Then, again, I thought of what my great enlightened friend and patron would say to me, and again my resolution rose indignant, and indissoluble save by blood. I arose on my right knee and left foot, and had just begun to advance the latter forward: the next step my great purpose had been accomplished, and the culprit had suffered the punishment due to his crimes. But what moved him I knew not: in the critical moment he sprung to his feet, and dashing himself furiously against me, he overthrew me, at the imminent peril of my life. I disencumbered myself by main force, and fled, but he overhied me, knocked me down, and threatened, with dreadful oaths, to throw me from the cliff. After I was a little recovered from the stunning blow, I aroused myself to the combat; and though I do not recollect the circumstances of that deadly scuffle very minutely, I know that I vanquished him so far as to force him to ask my pardon, and crave a reconciliation. I spurned at both, and left him to the chastisements of his own wicked and corrupt heart.

My friend met me again on the hill, and derided me, in a haughty and stern manner, for my imbecility and want of decision. I told him how nearly I had effected my purpose, and excused myself as well as I was able. On this, seeing me bleeding, he advised me to swear the peace against my brother, and have him punished in the mean time, he being the first aggressor. I promised compliance, and we parted, for I was somewhat ashamed of my failure, and was glad to be quit for the present of one of whom I stood so much in awe.

When my reverend father beheld me bleeding a second time by the hand of a brother, he was moved to the highest point of displeasure; and, relying on his high interest and the justice of his cause, he brought the matter at once before the courts. My brother and I were first examined face to face. His declaration

was a mere romance: mine was not the truth; but as it was by the advice of my reverend father, and that of my illustrious friend, both of whom I knew to be sincere Christians and true believers, that I gave it, I conceived myself completely justified on that score. I said, I had gone up into the mountain early on the morning to pray, and had withdrawn myself, for entire privacy, into a little sequestered dell—had laid aside my cap, and was in the act of kneeling, when I was rudely attacked by my brother, knocked over, and nearly slain. They asked my brother if this was true. He acknowledged that it was; that I was bare-headed, and in the act of kneeling when he ran foul of me without any intent of doing so. But the judge took him to task on the improbability of this, and put the profligate sore out of countenance. The rest of his tale told still worse, insomuch that he was laughed at by all present, for the judge remarked to him, that granting it was true that he had at first run against me on an open mountain, and overthrown me by accident, how was it, that after I had extricated myself and fled, that he had pursued, overtaken, and knocked me down a second time? Would he pretend that all that was likewise by chance? The culprit had nothing to say for himself on this head, and I shall not forget my exultation and that of my reverend father, when the sentence of the judge was delivered. It was, that my wicked brother should be thrown into prison, and tried on a criminal charge of assault and battery, with the intent of committing murder. This was a just and righteous judge, and saw things in their proper bearings, that is, he could discern between a righteous and a wicked man, and then there could be no doubt as to which of the two were acting right, and which wrong.

Had I not been sensible that a justified person could do nothing wrong, I should not have been at my ease concerning the statement I had been induced to give on this occasion. I could easily perceive, that by rooting out the weeds from the garden of the Church, I heightened the growth of righteousness; but as to the tardy way of giving false evidence on matters of such doubtful issue, I confess I saw no great propriety in it from the beginning. But I now only moved by the will and mandate of my illustrious friend: I had no peace or comfort when out of his sight, nor have I ever been able to boast of much in his presence; so true is it that a Christian's life is one of suffering.

My time was now much occupied, along with my reverend preceptor, in making ready for the approaching trial, as the prosecutors. Our counsel assured us of a complete victory, and that banishment would be the mildest award of the law on the offender. Mark how different was the result! From the shifts and ambiguities of a wicked Bench, who had a fellow-feeling of iniquity with the defenders,—my suit was cast, the graceless libertine was absolved, and I was incarcerated, and bound over to keep the peace, with heavy penalties, before I was set at liberty.

I was exceedingly disgusted at this issue, and blamed the counsel of my friend to his face. He expressed great grief, and expatiated on the wickedness of our judicatories, adding, 'I see I cannot depend on you for quick and summary measures, but for your sake I shall be revenged on that wicked judge, and that you shall see in a few days.' The Lord Justice Clerk died that same week! But he died in his own house and his own bed, and by what means my friend effected it, I do not know. He would not tell me a single word of the matter, but the judge's sudden death made a great noise, and I made so many curious inquiries regarding the particulars of it, that some suspicions were like to attach to our family, of some unfair means used. For my part I know nothing, and rather think he died by the visitation of Heaven, and that my friend had foreseen it, by symptoms, and soothed me by promises of complete revenge.

It was some days before he mentioned my brother's meditated death to me again, and certainly he then found me exasperated against him personally to the highest degree. But I told him that I could not now think any more of it, owing to the late judgment of the court, by which, if my brother were missing or found dead, I would not only forfeit my life, but my friends would be ruined by the penalties.

'I suppose you know and believe in the perfect safety of your soul,' said he, 'and that that is a matter settled from the beginning of time, and now sealed and ratified both in heaven and earth?'

'I believe in it thoroughly and perfectly,' said I; 'and whenever I entertain doubts of it, I am sensible of sin and weakness.'

'Very well, so then am I,' said he. 'I think I can now divine, with all manner of certainty, what will be the high and merited guerdon of your immortal part. Hear me then farther: I give you my solemn assurance, and bond of blood, that no human hand shall ever henceforth be able to injure your life, or shed one drop of your precious blood, but it is on the condition that you walk always by my directions.'

'I will do so with cheerfulness,' said I; 'for without your enlightened counsel, I feel that I can do nothing. But as to your power of protecting my life, you must excuse me for doubting of it. Nay, were we in your own proper dominions, you could not ensure that.'

'In whatever dominion or land I am, my power accompanies me,' said he: 'and it is only against human might and human weapon that I ensure your life; on that will I keep an eye, and on that you may depend. I have never broken word or promise with you. Do you credit me?'

‘Yes, I do,’ said I; ‘for I see you are in earnest. I believe, though I do not comprehend you.’

‘Then why do you not at once challenge your brother to the field of honour? Seeing you now act without danger, cannot you also act without fear?’

‘It is not fear,’ returned I: ‘believe me, I hardly know what fear is. It is a doubt, that on all these emergencies constantly haunts my mind, that in performing such and such actions I may fall from my upright state. This makes fratricide a fearful task.’

‘This is imbecility itself,’ said he. ‘We have settled, and agreed on that point an hundred times. I would therefore advise that you challenge your brother to single combat. I shall ensure your safety, and he cannot refuse giving you satisfaction.’

‘But then the penalties?’ said I.

‘We will try to evade these,’ said he; ‘and supposing you should be caught, if once you are Laird of Dalcastle and Balgrennan, what are the penalties to you?’

‘Might we not rather pop him off in private and quietness, as we did the deistical divine?’ said I.

‘The deed would be alike meritorious, either way,’ said he. ‘But may we not wait for years before we find an opportunity? My advice is to challenge him, as privately as you will, and there cut him off.’

‘So be it then,’ said I. ‘When the moon is at the full, I will send for him forth to speak with one, and there will I smite him and slay him, and he shall trouble the righteous no more.’

‘Then this is the very night,’ said he. ‘The moon is nigh to the full, and this night your brother and his sinful mates hold carousal; for there is an intended journey to-morrow. The exulting profligate leaves town, where we must remain till the time of my departure hence; and then is he safe, and must live to dishonour God, and not only destroy his own soul, but those of many others. Alack, and wo is me! The sins that he and his friends will commit this very night, will cry to heaven against us for our shameful delay! When shall our great work of cleansing the sanctuary be finished, if we proceed at this puny rate?’

‘I see the deed *must* be done, then,’ said I: ‘and since it is so, it shall be done. I will arm myself forthwith, and from the midst of his wine and debauchery you shall call him forth to me, and there will I smite him with the edge of the sword, that our great work be not retarded.’

‘If thy execution were equal to thy intent, how great a man you soon might be!’ said he. ‘We shall make the attempt once more; and if it fail again, why, I must use other means to bring about my high purposes relating to mankind.—Home and make ready. I will go and procure what information I can regarding their motions, and will meet you in disguise twenty minutes hence, at the first turn of Hewie’s lane beyond the loch.’

‘I have nothing to make ready,’ said I: ‘for I do not choose to go home. Bring me a sword, that we may consecrate it with prayer and vows, and if I use it not to the bringing down of the wicked and profane, then may the Lord do so to me, and more also!’

We parted, and there was I left again to the multiplicity of my own thoughts for the space of twenty minutes, a thing my friend never failed in subjecting me to, and these were worse to contend with than hosts of sinful men. I prayed inwardly, that these deeds of mine might never be brought to the knowledge of men who were incapable of appreciating the high motives that led to them; and then I sung part of the 10th Psalm, likewise in spirit; but for all these efforts, my sinful doubts returned, so that when my illustrious friend joined me, and proffered me the choice of two gilded rapiers, I declined accepting any of them, and began, in a very bold and energetic manner, to express my doubts regarding the justification of all the deeds of perfect men. He chided me severely, and branded me with cowardice, a thing that my nature never was subject to; and then he branded me with falsehood, and breach of the most solemn engagements both to God and man.

I was compelled to take the rapier, much against my inclination; but for all the arguments, threats, and promises that he could use, I would not consent to send a challenge to my brother by his mouth. There was one argument only that he made use of which had some weight with me, but yet it would not preponderate. He told me my brother was gone to a notorious and scandalous habitation of women, and that if I left him to himself for ever so short a space longer, it might embitter his state through ages to come. This was a trying concern to me; but I resisted it, and reverted to my doubts. On this he said that he had meant to do me honour, but since I put it out of his power, he would do the deed, and take the responsibility on himself. ‘I have with sore travail procured a guard-ship of your life,’ added he. ‘For my own, I have not; but, be that as it will, I shall not be baffled in my attempts to benefit my friends without a trial. You will at all events accompany me, and see that I get justice?’

‘Certes, I will do thus much,’ said I; ‘and wo be to him if his arm prevail against my friend and patron!’

His lip curled with a smile of contempt, which I could hardly brook; and I began to be afraid that the eminence to which I had been destined by him was already fading from my view. And I thought what I should then do to ingratiate myself again with him, for without his countenance I had no life. ‘I will be a

man in act,' thought I, 'but in sentiment I will not yield, and for this he must surely admire me the more.'

As we emerged from the shadowy lane into the fair moonshine, I started so that my whole frame underwent the most chilling vibrations of surprise. I again thought I had been taken at unawares, and was conversing with another person. My friend was equipped in the Highland garb, and so completely translated into another being, that, save by his speech, all the senses of mankind could not have recognized him. I blessed myself, and asked whom it was his pleasure to personify to-night? He answered me carelessly, that it was a spark whom he meant should bear the blame of whatever might fall out to-night; and that was all that passed on the subject.

We proceeded by some stone steps at the foot of the North Loch, in hot argument all the way. I was afraid that our conversation might be overheard, for the night was calm and almost as light as day, and we saw sundry people crossing us as we advanced. But the zeal of my friend was so high, that he disregarded all danger, and continued to argue fiercely and loudly on my delinquency, as he was pleased to call it. I stood on one argument alone, which was, 'that I did not think the Scripture promises to the elect, taken in their utmost latitude, warranted the assurance that they could do no wrong; and that, therefore, it behoved every man to look well to his steps.'

There was no religious scruple that irritated my enlightened friend and master so much as this. He could not endure it. And the sentiments of our great covenanted reformers being on his side, there is not a doubt that I was wrong. He lost all patience on hearing what I advanced on this matter, and taking hold of me, he led me into a darksome booth in a confined entry; and, after a friendly but cutting reproach, he bade me remain there in secret and watch the event; 'and if I fall,' said he, 'you will not fail to avenge my death?'

I was so entirely overcome with vexation that I could make no answer, on which he left me abruptly, a prey to despair; and I saw or heard no more, till he came down to the moonlight green followed by my brother. They had quarrelled before they came within my hearing, for the first words I heard were those of my brother, who was in a state of intoxication, and he was urging a reconciliation, as was his wont on such occasions. My friend spurned at the suggestion, and dared him to the combat; and after a good deal of boastful altercation, which the turmoil of my spirits prevented me from remembering, my brother was compelled to draw his sword and stand on the defensive. It was a desperate and terrible engagement. I at first thought that the royal stranger and great champion of the faith would overcome his opponent with ease, for I considered heaven as on his side, and nothing but the arm of sinful flesh against him. But I was deceived: The sinner stood firm as a rock, while the assailant flitted about like a shadow, or rather like a spirit. I smiled inwardly, conceiving that these lightsome manoeuvres were all a sham to show off his art and mastership in the exercise, and that whenever they came to close fairly, that instant my brother would be overcome. Still I was deceived: My brother's arm seemed invincible, so that the closer they fought the more palpably did it prevail. They fought round the green to the very edge of the water, and so round, till they came close up to the covert where I stood. There being no more room to shift ground, my brother then forced him to come to close quarters, on which, the former still having the decided advantage, my friend quitted his sword, and called out. I could resist no longer; so, springing from my concealment, I rushed between them with my sword drawn, and parted them as if they had been two schoolboys: then turning to my brother, I addressed him as follows:—'Wretch! miscreant! knowest thou what thou art attempting? Wouldst thou lay thine hand on the Lord's anointed, or shed his precious blood? Turn thee to me, that I may chastise thee for all thy wickedness, and not for the many injuries thou hast done to me!' To it we went, with full thirst of vengeance on every side. The duel was fierce; but the might of heaven prevailed, and not my might. The ungodly and reprobate young man fell, covered with wounds, and with curses and blasphemy in his mouth, while I escaped uninjured. Thereto his power extended not.

I will not deny, that my own immediate impressions of this affair in some degree differed from this statement. But this is precisely as my illustrious friend described it to me afterwards, and I can rely implicitly on his information, as he was at that time a looker-on, and my senses all in a state of agitation, and he could have no motive for saying what was not the positive truth.

Never till my brother was down did we perceive that there had been witnesses to the whole business. Our ears were then astounded by rude challenges of unfair play, which were quite appalling to me; but my friend laughed at them, and conducted me off in perfect safety. As to the unfairness of the transaction, I can say thus much, that my royal friend's sword was down ere ever mine was presented. But if it still be accounted unfair to take up a conqueror, and punish him in his own way, I answer: That if a man is sent on a positive mission by his master, and hath laid himself under vows to do his work, he ought not to be too nice in the means of accomplishing it; and farther, I appeal to holy writ, wherein many instances are recorded of the pleasure the Lord takes in the final extinction of the wicked and

profane; and this position I take to be unanswerable.

I was greatly disturbed in my mind for many days, knowing that the transaction had been witnessed, and sensible also of the perilous situation I occupied, owing to the late judgment of the court against me. But, on the contrary, I never saw my enlightened friend in such high spirits. He assured me there was no danger; and again repeated, that he warranted my life against the power of man. I thought proper, however, to remain in hiding for a week; but, as he said, to my utter amazement, the blame fell on another, who was not only accused, but pronounced guilty by the general voice, and outlawed for non-appearance! how could I doubt, after this, that the hand of heaven was aiding and abetting me? The matter was beyond my comprehension; and as for my friend, he never explained any thing that was past, but his activity and art were without a parallel.

He enjoyed our success mightily; and for his sake I enjoyed it somewhat, but it was on account of his comfort only, for I could not for my life perceive in what degree the church was better or purer than before these deeds were done. He continued to flatter me with great things, as to honours, fame, and emolument; and, above all, with the blessing and protection of him to whom my body and soul were dedicated. But after these high promises, I got no longer peace; for he began to urge the death of my father with such an unremitting earnestness, that I found I had nothing for it but to comply. I did so; and cannot express his enthusiasm of approbation. So much did he hurry and press me in this, that I was forced to devise some of the most openly violent measures, having no alternative. Heaven spared me the deed, taking, in that instance, the vengeance in its own hand; for before my arm could effect the sanguine but meritorious act, the old man followed his son to the grave. My illustrious and zealous friend seemed to regret this somewhat; but he comforted himself with the reflection, that still I had the merit of it, having not only consented to it, but in fact effected it, for by doing the one action I had brought about both.

No sooner were the obsequies of the funeral over, than my friend and I went to Dalcastle, and took undisputed possession of the houses, lands, and effects that had been my father's; but his plate, and vast treasures of ready money, he had bestowed on a voluptuous and unworthy creature, who had lived long with him as a mistress. Fain would I have sent her after her lover, and gave my friend some hints on the occasion; but he only shook his head, and said that we must lay all selfish and interested motives out of the question.

For a long time, when I awaked in the morning, I could not believe my senses, that I was indeed the undisputed and sole proprietor of so much wealth and grandeur; and I felt so much gratified, that I immediately set about doing all the good I was able, hoping to meet with all approbation and encouragement from my friend. I was mistaken: He checked the very first impulses towards such a procedure, questioned my motives, and uniformly made them out to be wrong. There was one morning that a servant said to me, there was a lady in the back chamber who wanted to speak with me, but he could not tell me who it was, for all the old servants had left the mansion, every one on hearing of the death of the late laird, and those who had come knew none of the people in the neighbourhood. From several circumstances, I had suspicions of private confabulations with women, and refused to go to her, but bid the servant inquire what she wanted. She would not tell; she could only state the circumstances to me; so I, being sensible that a little dignity of manner became me in my elevated situation, returned for answer, that if it was business that could not be transacted by my steward, it must remain untransacted. The answer which the servant brought back was of a threatening nature. She stated that she *must* see me, and if I refused her satisfaction there, she would compel it where I should not evite her.

My friend and director appeared pleased with my dilemma, and rather advised that I should hear what the woman had to say; on which I consented, provided she would deliver her mission in his presence. She came in with manifest signs of anger and indignation, and began with bold and direct charge against me of a shameful assault on one of her daughters; of having used the basest of means in order to lead her aside from the paths of rectitude; and on the failure of these, of having resorted to the most unqualified measures.

I denied the charge in all its bearings, assuring the dame that I had never so much as seen either of her daughters to my knowledge, far less wronged them; on which she got into great wrath, and abused me to my face as an accomplished vagabond, hypocrite, and sensualist; and she went so far as to tell me roundly, that if I did not *marry* her daughter, she would bring me to the gallows, and that in a very short time.

'Marry your daughter, honest woman!' said I, 'on the faith of a Christian, I never saw your daughter; and you may rest assured in this, that I will neither marry you nor her. Do you consider how short a time I have been in this place? How much that time has been occupied? And how there was even a *possibility* that I could have accomplished such villainies?'

‘And how long does your Christian reverence suppose you have remained in this place since the late laird’s death?’ said she.

‘That is too well known to need recapitulation,’ said I: only a very few days, though I cannot at present specify the exact number; perhaps from thirty to forty, or so. But in all that time, certes, I have never seen either you or any of your two daughters that you talk of. You must be quite sensible of that.’

My friend shook his head three times during this short sentence, while the woman held up her hands in amazement and disgust, exclaiming, ‘There goes the self-righteous one! There goes the consecrated youth, who cannot err! You, sir, know, and the world shall know of the faith that is in this most just, devout, and religious miscreant! Can you deny that you have already been in this place four months and seven days? Or that in that time you have been forbid my house twenty times? Or that you have persevered in your endeavours to effect the basest and most ungenerous of purposes? Or that you *have* attained them? hypocrite and deceiver as you are! Yes, sir; I say, dare you deny that you *have* attained your vile, selfish, and degrading purposes towards a young, innocent, and unsuspecting creature, and thereby ruined a poor widow’s only hope in this world? No, you cannot look in my face, and deny aught of this.’

‘The woman is raving mad!’ said I. ‘You, illustrious sir, know, that in the first instance, I have not yet been in this place *one* month.’ My friend shook his head again, and answered me, ‘You are wrong, my dear friend; you are wrong. It is indeed the space of time that the lady hath stated, to a day, since you came here, and I came with you; and I am sorry that I know for certain that you have been frequently haunting her house, and have often had private correspondence with one of the young ladies too. Of the nature of it I presume not to know.’

‘You are mocking me,’ said I. ‘But as well may you try to reason me out of my existence, as to convince me that I have been here even one month, or that any of those things you allege against me has the shadow of truth or evidence to support it. I will swear to you, by the great God that made me; and by—’

‘Hold, thou most abandoned profligate!’ cried she violently, ‘and do not add perjury to your other detestable crimes. Do not, for mercy’s sake, any more profane that name whose attributes you have wrested and disgraced. But tell me what reparation you propose offering to my injured child?’

‘I again declare, before heaven, woman, that to the best of my knowledge and recollection, I never saw your daughter. I now think I have some faint recollection of having seen your face, but where, or in what place, puzzles me quite.’

‘And, why?’ said she. ‘Because for months and days you have been in such a state of extreme inebriety, that your time has gone over like a dream that has been forgotten. I believe, that from the day you came first to my house, you have been in a state of utter delirium, and that principally from the fumes of wine and ardent spirits.’

‘It is a manifest falsehood!’ said I; ‘I have never, since I entered on the possession of Dalcastle, tasted wine or spirits, saving once, a few evenings ago; and, I confess to my shame, that I was led too far; but I have craved forgiveness and obtained it. I take my noble and distinguished friend there for a witness to the truth of what I assert; a man who has done more, and sacrificed more for the sake of genuine Christianity, than any this world contains. Him you will believe.’

‘I hope you have attained forgiveness,’ said he, seriously. ‘Indeed it would be next to blasphemy to doubt it. But, of late, you have been very much addicted to intemperance. I doubt if, from the first night you tasted the delights of drunkenness, that you have ever again been in your right mind until Monday last. Doubtless you have been for a good while most diligent in your addresses to this lady’s daughter.’

‘This is unaccountable,’ said I. ‘It is impossible that I can have been doing a thing, and not doing it at the same time. But indeed, honest woman, there have several incidents occurred to me in the course of my life which persuade me I have a second self; or that there is some other being who appears in my likeness.’

Here my friend interrupted me with a sneer, and a hint that I was talking insanely; and then he added, turning to the lady, ‘I know my friend Mr Colwan will do what is just and right. Go and bring the young lady to him, that he may see her, and he will then recollect all his former amours with her.’

‘I humbly beg your pardon, sir,’ said I. ‘But the mention of such a thing as *amours* with any woman existing, to me, is really so absurd, so far from my principles, so far from the purity of nature and frame to which I was born and consecrated, that I hold it as an insult, and regard it with contempt.’

I would have said more in reprobation of such an idea, had not my servant entered, and said, that a gentleman wanted to see me on business. Being glad of an opportunity of getting quit of my lady visitor, I ordered the servant to show him in; and forthwith a little lean gentleman, with a long acquiline nose, and a bald head, daubed all over with powder and pomatum, entered. I thought I recollected having seen him too, but could not remember his name, though he spoke to me with the greatest familiarity; at least, that sort of familiarity that an official person generally assumes. He bustled about and about, speaking to

every one, but declined listening for a single moment to any. The lady offered to withdraw, but he stopped her.

'No, no, Mrs Keeler, you need not go; you need not go; you *must* not go, madam. The business I came about, concerns you—yes, that it does—Bad business yon of Walker's? Eh? Could not help it—did all I could, Mr Wringhim. Done your business. Have it all cut and dry here, sir—No, this is not it—Have it among them, though—I'm at a little loss for your name, sir, (addressing my friend,)—seen you very often, though—exceedingly often—quite well acquainted with you.'

'No, sir, you are not,' said my friend, sternly.—The intruder never regarded him; never so much as lifted his eyes from his bundle of law papers, among which he was bustling with great hurry and importance, but went on—

'*Im*possible! Have seen a face very like it, then—what did you say your name was, sir?—very like it indeed. Is it not the young laird who was murdered whom you resemble so much?'

Here Mrs Keeler uttered a scream, which so much startled me, that it seems I grew pale. And on looking at my friend's face, there was something struck me so forcibly in the likeness between him and my late brother, that I had very nearly fainted. The woman exclaimed, that it was my brother's spirit that stood beside me.

'Im*poss*ible!' exclaimed the attorney: 'at least I hope not, else his signature is not worth a pin. There is some balance due on yon business, madam. Do you wish your account? because I have it here, ready discharged, and it does not suit letting such things lie over. This business of Mr Colwan's will be a severe one on you, madam,—*ra*ther a severe one.'

'What business of mine, if it be your will, sir,' said I. 'For my part I never engaged you in business of any sort, less or more.' He never regarded me, but went on. 'You may appeal, though: Yes, yes, there are such things as appeals for the refractory. Here it is, gentlemen,—here they are all together—Here is, in the first place, sir, your power of attorney, regularly warranted, sealed, and signed with your own hand.'

'I declare solemnly that I never signed that document,' said I.

'Ay, ay, the system of denial is not a bad one in general,' said my attorney: 'but at present there is no occasion for it. You do not deny your own hand?'

'I deny every thing connected with the business,' cried I; 'I disclaim it *in toto*, and declare that I know no more about it than the child unborn.'

'That is exceedingly good!' exclaimed he; 'I like your pertinacity vastly! I have three of your letters, and three of your signatures; that part is all settled, and I hope so is the whole affair; for here is the original grant to your father, which he has never thought proper to put in requisition. Simple gentleman! But here have I, Lawyer Linkum, in one hundredth part of the time that any other notary, writer, attorney, or writer to the signet in Britain, would have done it, procured the signature of his Majesty's commissioner, and thereby confirmed the charter to you and your house, sir, for ever and ever,—Begging your pardon, madam.' The lady, as well as myself, tried several times to interrupt the loquacity of Linkum, but in vain: he only raised his hand with a quick flourish, and went on:—

'Here it is:—"JAMES, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, to his right trusty cousin, sendeth greeting: And whereas his right leal and trustworthy cousin, George Colwan, of Dalcastle and Balgrennan, hath suffered great losses, and undergone much hardship, on behalf of his Majesty's rights and titles; he therefore, for himself, and as prince and steward of Scotland, and by the consent of his right trusty cousins and councillors, hereby grants to the said George Colwan, his heirs and assignees whatsomever, heritably and irrevocably, all and haill the lands and others underwritten: *To wit*, All and haill, the five merk land of Kipplerig; the five pound land of Easter Knockward, with all the towers, fortalices, manor-places, houses, biggings, yards, orchards, tofts, crofts, mills, woods, fishings, mosses, muirs, meadows, commonties, pasturages, coals, coal-heughs, tenants, tenantries, services of free tenants, annexes, connexes, dependencies, parts, pendicles, and pertinents of the same whatsoever; to be peaceably brooked, joysed, set, used, and disposed of by him and his aboves, as specified, heritably and irrevocably, in all time coming: And, in testimony thereof, His Majesty, for himself, and as prince and steward of Scotland, with the advice and consent of his foresaids, knowledge, proper motive, and kingly power, makes, erects, creates, unites, annexes, and incorporates, the whole lands above mentioned in an haill and free barony, by all the rights, miethes, and marches thereof, old and divided, as the same lies, in length and breadth, in houses, biggings, mills, multures, hawking, hunting, fishing; with court, plaint, herezeld, fock, fork, sack, sock, thole, thame, vert, wraik, waith, wair, venison, outfang thief, infang thief, pit and gallows, and all and sundry other commodities. Given at our Court of Whitehall, &c. &c. God save the King.

Compositio 5 *lib*. 13.8.
Registrate 26th September, 1687."

'See, madam, here are ten signatures of privy councillors of that year, and here are other ten of the present year, with his Grace the Duke of Queensberry at the head. All right—See here it is, sir,—all right—done your work. So you see, madam, this gentleman is the true and sole heritor of all the land that your father possesses, with all the rents thereof for the last twenty years, and upwards—Fine job for my employers!—sorry on your account, madam—can't help it.'

I was again going to disclaim all interest or connection in the matter, but my friend stopped me; and the plaints and lamentations of the dame became so overpowering, that they put an end to all farther colloquy; but Lawyer Linkum followed me, and stated his great outlay, and the important services he had rendered me, until I was obliged to subscribe an order to him for £100 on my banker.

I was now glad to retire with my friend, and ask seriously for some explanation of all this. It was in the highest degree unsatisfactory. He confirmed all that had been stated to me; assuring me, that I had not only been assiduous in my endeavours to seduce a young lady of great beauty, which it seemed I had effected, but that I had taken counsel, and got this supposed, old, false, and forged grant, raked up and new signed, to ruin the young lady's family quite, so as to throw her entirely on myself for protection, and be wholly at my will.

This was to me wholly incomprehensible. I could have freely made oath to the contrary of every particular. Yet the evidences were against me, and of a nature not to be denied. Here I must confess, that, highly as I disapproved of the love of women, and all intimacies and connections with the sex, I felt a sort of indefinite pleasure, an ungracious delight in having a beautiful woman solely at my disposal. But I thought of her spiritual good in the meantime. My friend spoke of my backslidings with concern; requesting me to make sure of my forgiveness, and to forsake them; and then he added some words of sweet comfort. But from this time forth I began to be sick at times of my existence. I had heart-burnings, longings, and yearnings, that would not be satisfied; and I seemed hardly to be an accountable creature; being thus in the habit of executing transactions of the utmost moment, without being sensible that I did them. I was a being incomprehensible to myself. Either I had a second self, who transacted business in my likeness, or else my body was at times possessed by a spirit over which it had no controul, and of whose actions my own soul was wholly unconscious. This was an anomaly not to be accounted for by any philosophy of mine, and I was many times, in contemplating it, excited to terrors and mental torments hardly describable. To be in a state of consciousness and unconsciousness, at the same time, in the same body and same spirit, was impossible. I was under the greatest anxiety, dreading some change would take place momently in my nature; for of dates I could make nothing: one-half, or two-thirds of my time, seemed to me to be totally lost. I often, about this time, prayed with great fervour, and lamented my hopeless condition, especially in being liable to the commission of crimes, which I was not sensible of, and could not eschew. And I confess, notwithstanding the promises on which I had been taught to rely, I began to have secret terrors, that the great enemy of man's salvation was exercising powers over me, that might eventually lead to my ruin. These were but temporary and sinful fears, but they added greatly to my unhappiness.

The worst thing of all was, what hitherto I had never felt, and, as yet, durst not confess to myself, that the presence of my illustrious and devoted friend was becoming irksome to me. When I was by myself, I breathed freer, and my step was lighter; but when he approached, a pang went to my heart, and, in his company, I moved and acted as if under a load that I could hardly endure. What a state to be in! And yet to shake him off was impossible—we were incorporated together—identified with one another, as it were, and the power was not in me to separate myself from him. I still knew nothing who he was, farther than that he was a potentate of some foreign land, bent on establishing some pure and genuine doctrines of Christianity, hitherto only half understood, and less than half exercised. Of this I could have no doubts, after all that he had said, done, and suffered in the cause. But, alongst with this, I was also certain, that he was possessed of some supernatural power, of the source of which I was wholly ignorant. That a man could be a Christian, and at the same time a powerful necromancer, appeared inconsistent, and adverse to every principle taught in our church; and from this I was led to believe, that he inherited his powers from on high, for I could not doubt either of the soundness of his principles, or that he accomplished things impossible to account for.

Thus was I sojourning in the midst of a chaos of confusion. I looked back on my bypast life with pain, as one looks back on a perilous journey, in which he has attained his end, without gaining any advantage either to himself, or others; and I looked forward, as on a darksome waste, full of repulsive and terrific shapes, pitfalls, and precipices, to which there was no definite bourne, and from which I turned with disgust. With my riches, my unhappiness was increased tenfold; and here, with another great acquisition of property, for which I had pleaed, and which I had gained in a dream, my miseries and difficulties were increasing. My principal feeling, about this time, was an insatiable longing for something that I cannot describe or denominate properly, unless I say it was for *utter oblivion* that I longed. I desired to sleep; but it was for a deeper and longer sleep, than that in which the senses were nightly steeped. I longed to be at rest and quiet, and close my eyes on the past and the future alike, as far as this frail life was concerned. But what had been formerly and finally settled in the counsels above, I presumed not to call in question.

In this state of irritation and misery, was I dragging on an existence, disgusted with all around me, and

in particular with my mother, who, with all her love and anxiety, had such an insufferable mode of manifesting them, that she had by this time rendered herself exceedingly obnoxious to me. The very sound of her voice at a distance, went to my heart like an arrow, and made all my nerves to shrink; and as for the beautiful young lady of whom they told me I had been so much enamoured, I shunned all intercourse with her or hers, as I would have done with the devil. I read some of their letters and burnt them, but refused to see either the young lady or her mother, on any account.

About this time it was, that my worthy and reverend parent came with one of his elders to see my mother and myself. His presence always brought joy with it into our family, for my mother was uplifted, and I had so few who cared for me, or for whom I cared, that I felt rather gratified at seeing him. My illustrious friend was also much more attached to him, than any other person, (except myself,) for their religious principles tallied in every point, and their conversation was interesting, serious, and sublime. Being anxious to entertain well and highly the man to whom I had been so much indebted, and knowing that with all his integrity and righteousness, he disdained not the good things of this life, I brought from the late laird's well-stored cellars, various fragrant and salubrious wines, and we drank and became merry, and I found that my miseries and overpowering calamities, passed away over my head like a shower that is driven by the wind. I became elevated and happy, and welcomed my guests an hundred times; and then I joined them in religious conversation, with a zeal and enthusiasm which I had not often experienced, and which made all their hearts rejoice, so that I said to myself, 'Surely every gift of God is a blessing, and ought to be used with liberality and thankfulness.'

The next day I waked from a profound and feverish sleep, and called for something to drink. There was a servant answered whom I had never seen before, and he was clad in my servant's clothes and livery. I asked for Andrew Handyside, the servant who had waited at table the night before; but the man answered with a stare and a smile.

'What do you mean, sirrah,' said I. 'Pray what do you here? or what are you pleased to laugh at? I desire you to go about your business, and send me up Handyside. I want him to bring me something to drink.'

'Ye sanna want a drink, maister,' said the fellow: 'Tak a hearty ane, and see if it will wauken ye up something, sae that ye dinna ca' for ghaists through your sleep. Surely ye haena forgotten that Andrew Handyside has been in his grave these six months?'

This was a stunning blow to me. I could not answer farther, but sunk back on my pillow as if I had been a lump of lead, refusing to take a drink or any thing else at the fellow's hand, who seemed thus mocking me with so grave a face. The man seemed sorry, and grieved at my being offended, but I ordered him away, and continued sullen and thoughtful. Could I have again been for a season in utter oblivion to myself, and transacting business which I neither approved of, nor had any connection with! I tried to recollect something in which I might have been engaged, but nothing was pourtrayed on my mind subsequent to the parting with my friends at a late hour the evening before. The evening before it certainly was: but if so, how came it, that Andrew Handyside, who served at table that evening, should have been in his grave six months! This was a circumstance somewhat equivocal; therefore, being afraid to arise lest accusations of I knew not what might come against me, I was obliged to call once more in order to come at what intelligence I could. The same fellow appeared to receive my orders as before, and I set about examining him with regard to particulars. He told me his name was Scrape; that I hired him myself; of whom I hired him; and at whose recommendation. I smiled, and nodded so as to let the knave see I understood he was telling me a chain of falsehoods, but did not choose to begin with any violent asseverations to the contrary.

'And where is my noble friend and companion?' said I. 'How has he been engaged in the interim?'

'I dinna ken him, sir,' said Scrape: 'but have heard it said, that the strange mysterious person that attended you, him that the maist part of folks countit uncanny, had gane awa wi' a Mr Ringan o' Glasko last year, and had never returned.'

I thanked the Lord in my heart for this intelligence, hoping that the illustrious stranger had returned to his own land and people, and that I should thenceforth be rid of his controlling and appalling presence. 'And where is my mother?' said I.—The man's breath cut short, and he looked at me without returning any answer.—'I ask you where my mother is?' said I

'God only knows, and not I, where she is,' returned he. 'He knows where her soul is, and as for her body, if you dinna ken something o' it, I suppose nae man alive does.'

'What do you mean, you knave?' said I. 'What dark hints are these you are throwing out? Tell me precisely and distinctly what you know of my mother?'

'It is unco queer o' ye to forget, or pretend to forget every thing that gate, the day, sir,' said he. 'I'm sure you heard enough about it yestreen; an' I can tell you, there are some gayan ill-faurd stories gaun

about that business. But as the thing is to be tried afore the circuit lords, it wad be far wrang to say either this or that to influence the public mind; it is best just to let justice tak its swee. I hae naething to say, sir. Ye hae been a good enough maister to me, and paid my wages regularly, but ye hae muckle need to be innocent, for there are some heavy accusations rising against you.'

'I fear no accusations of man,' said I, 'as long as I can justify my cause in the sight of Heaven; and that I can do this I am well aware. Go you and bring me some wine and water, and some other clothes than these gaudy and glaring ones.'

I took a cup of wine and water; put on my black clothes, and walked out. For all the perplexity that surrounded me, I felt my spirits considerably buoyant. It appeared that I was rid of the two greatest bars to my happiness, by what agency I knew not. My mother, it seemed, was gone, who had become a grievous thorn in my side of late, and my great companion and counsellor, who tyrannized over every spontaneous movement of my heart, had likewise taken himself off. This last was an unspeakable relief; for I found that for a long season I had only been able to act by the motions of his mysterious mind and spirit. I therefore thanked God for my deliverance, and strode through my woods with a daring and heroic step; with independence in my eye, and freedom swinging in my right hand.

At the extremity of the Colwan wood, I perceived a figure approaching me with slow and dignified motion. The moment that I beheld it, my whole frame received a shock as if the ground on which I walked had sunk suddenly below me. Yet, at that moment, I knew not who it was; it was the air and motion of some one that I dreaded, and from whom I would gladly have escaped; but this I even had not power to attempt. It came slowly onward, and I advanced as slowly to meet it; yet when we came within speech, I still knew not who it was. It bore the figure, air, and features of my late brother, I thought, exactly; yet in all these there were traits so forbidding, so mixed with an appearance of misery, chagrin, and despair, that I still shrunk from the view, not knowing on whose face I looked. But when the being spoke, both my mental and bodily frame received another shock more terrible than the first, for it was the voice of the great personage I had so long denominated my friend, of whom I had deemed myself for ever freed, and whose presence and counsels I now dreaded more than hell. It was his voice, but so altered—I shall never forget it till my dying day. Nay, I can scarce conceive it possible that any earthly sounds could be so discordant, so repulsive to every feeling of a human soul, as the tones of the voice that grated on my ear at that moment. They were the sounds of the pit, wheezed through a grated cranny, or seemed so to my distempered imagination.

'So! Thou shudderest at my approach now, dost thou?' said he. 'Is this all the gratitude that you deign for an attachment of which the annals of the world furnish no parallel? An attachment which has caused me to forego power and dominion, might, homage, conquest and adulation, all that I might gain one highly valued and sanctified spirit, to my great and true principles of reformation among mankind. Wherein have I offended? What have I done for evil, or what have I not done for your good, that you would thus shun my presence?'

'Great and magnificent prince,' said I humbly, 'let me request of you to abandon a poor worthless wight to his own wayward fortune, and return to the dominion of your people. I am unworthy of the sacrifices you have made for my sake; and after all your efforts, I do not feel that you have rendered me either more virtuous or more happy. For the sake of that which is estimable in human nature, depart from me to your own home, before you render me a being either altogether above, or below the rest of my fellow creatures. Let me plod on towards heaven and happiness in my own way, like those that have gone before me, and I promise to stick fast by the great principles which you have so strenuously inculcated, on condition that you depart and leave me for ever.'

'Sooner shall you make the mother abandon the child of her bosom; nay, sooner cause the shadow to relinquish the substance, than separate me from your side. Our beings are amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one, and never shall I depart from this country until I can carry you in triumph with me.'

I can in nowise describe the effect this appalling speech had on me. It was like the announcement of death to one who had of late deemed himself free, if not of something worse than death, and of longer continuance. There was I doomed to remain in misery, subjugated, soul and body, to one whose presence was become more intolerable to me than ought on earth could compensate: And at that moment, when he beheld the anguish of my soul, he could not conceal that he enjoyed it. I was troubled for an answer, for which he was waiting: it became incumbent on me to say something after such a protestation of attachment; and, in some degree to shake the validity of it, I asked, with great simplicity, where he had been all this while?

'Your crimes and your extravagancies forced me from your side for a season,' said he; 'but now that I hope the day of grace is returned, I am again drawn towards you by an affection that has neither bounds nor interest; an affection for which I receive not even the poor return of gratitude, and which seems to

have its radical sources in fascination. I have been far, far abroad, and have seen much, and transacted much, since I last spoke with you. During that space, I grievously suspect that you have been guilty of great crimes and misdemeanours, crimes that would have sunk an unregenerated person to perdition; but as I knew it to be only a temporary falling off, a specimen of that liberty by which the chosen and elected ones are made free, I closed my eyes on the wilful debasement of our principles, knowing that the transgressions could never be accounted to your charge, and that in good time you would come to your senses, and throw the whole weight of your crimes on the shoulders that had voluntarily stooped to receive the load.'

'Certainly I will,' said I, 'as I and all the justified have a good right to do. But what crimes? What misdemeanours and transgressions do you talk about? For my part, I am conscious of none, and am utterly amazed at insinuations which I do not comprehend.'

'You have certainly been left to yourself for a season,' returned he, 'having gone on rather like a person in a delirium, than a Christian in his sober senses. You are accused of having made away with your mother privately; as also of the death of a beautiful young lady, whose affections you had seduced.'

'It is an intolerable and monstrous falsehood!' cried I, interrupting him; 'I never laid a hand on a woman to take away her life, and have even shunned their society from my childhood: I know nothing of my mother's exit, nor of that young lady's whom you mention—Nothing whatever.'

'I hope it is so,' said he. 'But it seems there are some strong presumptuous proofs against you, and I came to warn you this day that a precognition is in progress, and that unless you are perfectly convinced, not only of your innocence, but of your ability to prove it, it will be the safest course for you to abscond, and let the trial go on without you.'

'Never shall it be said that I shrunk from such a trial as this,' said I. 'It would give grounds for suspicious of guilt that never had existence, even in thought. I will go and show myself in every public place, that no slanderous tongue may wag against me. I have shed the blood of sinners, but of these deaths I am guiltless; therefore, I will face every tribunal, and put all my accusers down.'

'Asseveration will avail you but little,' answered he, composedly: 'It is, however, justifiable in its place, although to me it signifies nothing, who know too well that you *did* commit both crimes, in your own person, and with your own hands. Far be it from me to betray you; indeed, I would rather endeavour to palliate the offences; for though adverse to nature, I can prove them not to be so to the cause of pure Christianity, by the mode of which we have approved of it, and which we wish to promulgate.'

'If this that you tell me be true,' said I, 'then is it as true that I have two souls, which take possession of my bodily frame by turns, the one being all unconscious of what the other performs; for as sure as I have at this moment a spirit within me, fashioned and destined to eternal felicity, as sure am I utterly ignorant of the crimes you now lay to my charge.'

'Your supposition may be true in effect,' said he. 'We are all subjected to two distinct natures in the same person. I myself have suffered grievously in that way. The spirit that now directs my energies is not that with which I was endowed at my creation. It is changed within me, and so is my whole nature. My former days were those of grandeur and felicity. But, would you believe it? *I was not then a Christian*. Now I am. I have been converted to its truths by passing through the fire, and since my final conversion, my misery has been extreme. You complain that I have not been able to render you more happy than you were. Alas! do you expect it in the difficult and exterminating career which you have begun. I, however, promise you this—a portion of the only happiness which I enjoy, sublime in its motions, and splendid in its attainments—I will place you on the right hand of my throne, and show you the grandeur of my domains, and the felicity of my millions of true professors.'

I was once more humbled before this mighty potentate, and promised to be ruled wholly by his directions, although at that moment my nature shrunk from the concessions, and my soul longed rather to be inclosed in the deeps of the sea, or involved once more in utter oblivion. I was like Daniel in the den of lions, without his faith in divine support, and wholly at their mercy. I felt as one round whose body a deadly snake is twisted, which continues to hold him in its fangs, without injuring him, farther than in moving its scaly infernal folds with exulting delight, to let its victim feel to whose power he has subjected himself; and thus did I for a space drag an existence from day to day, in utter weariness and helplessness; at one time worshipping with great fervour of spirit, and at other times so wholly left to myself, as to work all manner of vices and follies with greediness. In these my enlightened friend never accompanied me, but I always observed that he was the first to lead me to every one of them, and then leave me in the lurch. The next day, after these my fallings off, he never failed to reprove me gently, blaming me for my venial transgressions; but then he had the art of reconciling all, by reverting to my justified and infallible state, which I found to prove a delightful healing salve for every sore.

But, of all my troubles, this was the chief: I was every day and every hour assailed with accusations of

deeds of which I was wholly ignorant; of acts of cruelty, injustice, defamation, and deceit; of pieces of business which I could not be made to comprehend; with law-suits, details, arrestments of judgement, and a thousand interminable quibbles from the mouth of my loquacious and conceited attorney. So miserable was my life rendered by these continued attacks, that I was often obliged to lock myself up for days together, never seeing any person save my man Samuel Scrape, who was a very honest blunt fellow, a staunch Cameronian, but withal very little conversant in religius matters. He said he came from a place called Penpunt, which I thought a name so ludicrous, that I called him by the name of his native village, an appellation of which he was very proud, and answered every thing with more civility and perspicuity when I denominated him Penpunt, than Samuel, his own Christian name. Of this peasant was I obliged to make a companion on sundry occasions, and strange indeed were the details which he gave me concerning myself, and the ideas of the country people concerning me. I took down a few of these in writing, to put off the time, and here leave them on record to show how the best and greatest actions are misconstrued among sinful and ignorant men.

'You say, Samuel, that I hired you myself—that I have been a good enough master to you, and have paid you your weekly wages punctually. Now, how is it that you say this, knowing, as you do, that I never hired you, and never paid you a sixpence of wages in the whole course of my life, excepting this last month?'

'Ye may as well say, master, that water's no water, or that stanes are no stanes. But that's just your gate, an' it is a great pity aye to do a thing an' profess the clean contrair. Weel then, since you havena paid me ony wages, an' I can prove day and date when I was hired, an' came hame to your service, will you be sae kind as to pay me now? That's the best way o' curing a man o' the mortal disease o' leasing-making that I ken o'.'

'I should think that Penpunt and Cameronian principles, would not admit of a man taking twice payment for the same article.'

'In sic a case as this, sir, it disna hinge upon principles, but a piece o' good manners; an' I can tell you that at sic a crisis, a Cameronian is a gayan well-bred man. He's driven to this, that he maun either make a breach in his friend's good name, or in his purse; an' O, sir, whilk o' thae, think you, is the most precious? For instance, an a Galloway drover had comed to the town o' Penpunt, an' said to a Cameronian, (the folk's a' Cameronians there,) "Sir, I want to buy your cow." "Vera weel," says the Cameronian, "I just want to sell the cow, sae gie me twanty punds Scots, an' take her w'ye." It's a bargain. The drover takes away the cow, an' gies the Cameronian his twanty pund Scots. But after that, he meets him again on the white sands, amang a' the drovers an' dealers o' the land, an' the Gallowayman, he says to the Cameronian, afore a'thae witnesses, "Come, Master Whiggam, I hae never paid you for yon bit useless cow, that I bought, I'll pay her the day, but you maun mind the luck-penny; there's muckle need for't,"—or something to that purpose. The Cameronian then turns out to be a civil man, an' canna bide to make the man baith a feele an' liar at the same time, afore a' his associates; an' therefore he pits his principles aff at the side, to be a kind o' sleepin partner, as it war, an' brings up his good breeding to stand at the counter: he pockets the money, gies the Galloway drover time o' day, an' comes his way. An' wha's to blame? *Man mind yoursel* is the first commandment. A Cameronian's principles never came atween him an' his purse, nor sanna in the present case; for as I canna bide to make you out a leear, I'll thank you for my wages.'

'Well, you shall have them, Samuel, if you declare to me that I hired you myself in this same person, and bargained with you with this same tongue, and voice, with which I speak to you just now.'

'That I do declare, unless ye hae twa persons o' the same appearance, and twa tongues to the same voice. But, od saif us, sir, do you ken what the auld wives o' the clachan say about you?'

'How should I, when no one repeats it to me?'

'Oo, I trow it's a' stuff;—folk shouldna heed what's said by auld crazy kimmers. But there are some o' them weel kend for witches too; an' they say,—lord have a care o' us!—they say the deil's often seen gaun sidie for sidie w'ye, whiles in ae shape, an'whiles in another. An'they say that he whiles takes your ain shape, or else enters into you, and then you turn a deil yoursel.'

I was so astounded at this terrible idea that had gone abroad, regarding my fellowship with the prince or darkness, that I could make no answer to the fellow's information, but sat like one in a stupor; and if it had not been for my well-founded faith, and conviction that I was a chosen and elected one before the world was made, I should at that moment have given into the popular belief, and fallen into the sin of despondency; but I was preserved from such a fatal error by an inward and unseen supporter. Still the insinuation was so like what I felt myself, that I was greatly awed and confounded.

The poor fellow observed this, and tried to do away the impression by some farther sage remarks of his own.

‘Hout, dear sir, it is balderdash, there’s nae doubt o’t. It is the crownhead o’ absurdity to tak in the havers o’ auld wives for gospel. I told them that my master was a peeous man, an’ a sensible man; an’ for praying, that he could ding auld Macmillan himsel. “Sae could the deil,” they said, “when he liket, either at preaching or praying, if these war to answer his ain ends.” “Na, na,” says I, “but he’s a strick believer in a’ the truths o’ Christianity, my master.” They said, sae was Satan, for that he was the firmest believer in a’ the truths of Christianity that was out o’ heaven; an’ that, sin’ the Revolution that the gospel had turned sae rife, he had been often driven to the shift o’ preaching it himsel, for the purpose o’ getting some wrang tenets introduced into it, and thereby turning it into blasphemy and ridicule.’

I confess, to my shame, that I was so overcome by this jumble of nonsense, that a chillness came over me, and in spite of all my efforts to shake off the impression it had made, I fell into a faint. Samuel soon brought me to myself, and after a deep draught of wine and water, I was greatly revived, and felt my spirit rise above the sphere of vulgar conceptions, and the restrained views of unregenerate men. The shrewd but loquacious fellow, perceiving this, tried to make some amends for the pain he had occasioned to me, by the following story, which I noted down, and which was brought on by a conversation to the following purport:-

‘Now, Penpunt, you may tell me all that passed between you and the wives of the clachan. I am better of that stomach qualm, with which I am sometimes seized, and shall be much amused by hearing the sentiments of noted witches regarding myself and my connections.’

‘Weel, you see, sir, I says to them, “It will be lang afore the deil intermeddle wi’ as serious a professor, and as fervent a prayer as my master, for gin he gets the upper hand o’ sickan men, wha’s to be safe?” An’, what think ye they said, sir? There was ane Lucky Shaw set up her lang lantern chafts, an’ answered me, an’ a’ the rest shanned and noddit in assent an’ approbation: “Ye silly, sauchless, Cameronian cuif!” quo she, “is that a’ that ye ken about the wiles and doings o’ the prince o’the air, that rules an’works in the bairns of disobedience? Gin ever he observes a proud professor, wha has mae than ordinary pretensions to a divine calling, and that reards and prays till the very howlets learn his preambles, *that’s* the man Auld Simmie fixes on to mak a dishclout o’. He canna get rest in hell, if he sees a man, or a set of men o’ this stamp, an’ when he sets fairly to wark, it is seldom that he disna bring them round till his ain measures by hook or by crook. Then, O it is a grand prize for him, an’ a proud deil he is, when he gangs hame to his ain ha’, wi’ a batch o’ the souls o’ sic strenuous professors on his back. Ay, I trow, auld Ingleby, the Liverpool packman, never came up Glasco street wi’ prouder pomp, when he had ten horse-laids afore him o’ Flanders lace, an’ Hollin lawn, an’ silks an’ satins frae the eastern Indians, than Satan wad strodge into hell with a pack-laid o’ the souls o’ proud professors on his braid shoulders. Ha, ha, ha! I think I see how the auld thief wad be gaun through his gizened dominions, crying his wares, in derision, ‘Wha will buy a fresh, cauler divine, a bouzy bishop, a fasting zealot, or a piping priest? For an’ their prayers an’ their praises, their aumuses, an’ their penances, their whinings, their howlings, their rantings, an’ their ravings, here they come at last! Behold the end! Here go the rare and precious wares! A fat professor for a bodle, an’ a lean ane for half a merk!”’ I declare, I trembled at the auld hag’s ravings but the lave o’ the kimmers applauded the sayings as sacred truths. An’ then Lucky went on: ‘There are many wolves in sheep’s claithing, among us, my man; mony deils aneath the masks o’ zealous professors, roaming about in kirks and meeting-houses o’ the land. It was but the year afore the last, that the people o’the town o’Auchtermuchty grew so rigidly righteous, that the meanest hind among them became a shining light in ither towns an’ parishes. There was nought to be heard, neither night nor day, but preaching, praying, argumentation, an’ catechising in a’ the famous town o’ Auchtermuchty. The young men wooed their sweethearts out o’ the Song o’ Solomon, an’ the girls returned answers in strings o’ verses out o’ the Psalms. At the lint-swinglings, they said questions round; and read chapters, and sang hymns at bridals; auld and young prayed in their dreams, an’ prophesied in their sleep, till the deils in the farrest nooks o’hell were alarmed, and moved to commotion. Gin it hadna been an auld carl, Robin Ruthven, Auchtermuchty wad at that time hae been ruined and lost for ever. But Robin was a cunning man, an’ had rather mae wits than his ain, for he had been in the hands o’ the fairies when he was young, an’ a’ kinds o’ spirits were visible to his een, an’their language as familiar to him as his ain mother tongue. Robin was sitting on the side o’the West Lowmond, ae still gloomy night in September, when he saw a bridal o’ corbie craws coming east the lift, just on the edge o’ the gloaming. The moment that Robin saw them, he kenned, by their movements, that they were craws o’ some ither warld than this; so he signed himself, and crap into the middle o’ his bourock. The corbie craws came a’ an’ sat down round about him, an’ they poukit their black sooty wings, an’ spread them out to the breeze to cool; and Robin heard ae corbie speaking, an’ another answering him; and the tane said to the tither: ‘Where will the ravens find a prey the night?’—‘On the lean crazy souls o’Auchtermuchty,’ quo the tither.—‘I fear they will be o’er weel wrappit up in the warm flannens o’ faith, an’ clouted wi’ the dirty duds o’ repentance,

for us to mak a meal o',' quo the first.—'Whaten vile sounds are these that I hear coming bumming up the hill?' 'O these are the hymns and praises o' the auld wives and creeshy louns o' Auchtermuchty, wha are gaun crooning their way to heaven; an' gin it warna for the shame o' being beat, we might let our great enemy tak them. For sic a prize as he will hae! Heaven, forsooth! What shall we think o' heaven, if it is to be filled wi' vermin like thae, amang whom there is mair poverty and pollution, than I can name.' 'No matter for that,' said the first, 'we cannot have our power set at defiance; though we should put hem in the thief's hole, we must catch them, and catch them with their own bait too. Come all to church to-morrow, and I'll let you hear how I'll gull the saints of Auchtermuchty. In the mean time, there is a feast on the Sidlaw hills tonight, below the hill of Macbeth,—Mount, Diabolus, and fly.' Then, with loud croaking and crowing, the bridal of corbies again scaled the dusky air, and left Robin Ruthven in the middle of his cairn.

'"The next day the congregation met in the kirk of Auchtermuchty, but the minister made not his appearance. The elders ran out and in, making inquiries; but they could learn nothing, save that the minister was missing. They ordered the clerk to sing a part of the 119th Psalm, until they saw if the minister would cast up. The clerk did as he was ordered, and by the time he reached the 77th verse, a strange divine entered the church, by the *western door*, and advanced solemnly up to the pulpit. The eyes of all the congregation were riveted on the sublime stranger, who was clothed in a robe of black sackloth, that flowed all around him, and trailed far behind, and they weened him an angel, come to exhort them, in disguise. He read out his text from the Prophecies of Ezekiel, which consisted of these singular words: 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come, whose right it is, and I will give it him.'

'"From these words he preached such a sermon as never was heard by human ears, at least never by ears of Auchtermuchty. It was a true, sterling, gospel sermon—it was striking, sublime, and awful in the extreme. He finally made out the IT, mentioned in the text, to mean, properly and positively, the notable town of Auchtermuchty. He proved all the people in it, to their perfect satisfaction, to be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and he assured them, that God would overturn them, their principles, and professions; and that they should be no more, until the devil, the town's greatest enemy, came, and then it should be given unto him for a prey, for it was his right, and to him it belonged, if there was not forthwith a radical change made in all their opinions and modes of worship.

'"The inhabitants of Auchtermuchty were electrified—they were charmed; they were actually raving mad about the grand and sublime truths delivered to them, by this eloquent and impressive preacher of Christianity. 'He is a prophet of the Lord,' said one, 'sent to warn us, as Jonah was sent to the Ninevites.' 'O, he is an angel sent from heaven, to instruct this great city,' said another, 'for no man ever uttered truths so sublime before.' The good people of Auchtermuchty were in perfect raptures with the preacher, who had thus sent them to hell by the slump, tag, rag, and bobtail! Nothing in the world delights a truly religious people so much, as consigning them to eternal damnation. They wondered after the preacher—they crowded together, and spoke of his sermon with admiration, and still as they conversed, the wonder and the admiration increased; so that honest Robin Ruthven's words would not be listened to. It was in vain that he told them he heard a raven speaking, and another raven answering him: the people laughed him to scorn, and kicked him out of their assemblies, as a one who spoke evil of dignities; and they called him a warlock, an' a daft body, to think to mak language out o' the crouping o' craws.

'"The sublime preacher could not be heard of, although all the country was sought for him, even to the minutest corner of St Johnston and Dundee; but as he had announced another sermon on the same text, on a certain day, all the inhabitants of that populous country, far and near, flocked to Auchtermuchty. Cupar, Newburgh, and Strathmiglo, turned out men, women, and children. Perth and Dundee gave their thousands; and from the East Nook of Fife to the foot of the Grampian hills, there was nothing but running and riding that morning to Auchtermuchty. The kirk would not hold the thousandth part of them. A splendid tent was erected on the brae north of the town, and round that the countless congregation assembled. When they were all waiting anxiously for the great preacher, behold, Robin Ruthven set up his head in the tent, and warned his countrymen to beware of the doctrines they were about to hear, for he could prove, to their satisfaction, that they were all false, and tended to their destruction!

'"The whole multitude raised a cry of indignation against Robin, and dragged him from the tent, the elders rebuking him, and the multitude threatening to resort to stronger measures; and though he told them a plain and unsophisticated tale of the black corbies, he was only derided. The great preacher appeared once more, and went through his two discourses with increased energy and approbation. All who heard him were amazed, and many of them went into fits, writhing and foaming in a state of the most horrid agitation. Robin Ruthven sat on the outskirts of the great assembly, listening with the rest,

and perceived what they, in the height of their enthusiasm, perceived not,—the ruinous tendency of the tenets so sublimely inculcated. Robin kenned the voice of his friend the corby-craw again, and was sure he could not be wrang: sae when public worship was finished, a'the elders an'a'the gentry flocked about the great preacher, as he stood on the green brae in the sight of the hale congregation, an' a' war alike anxious to pay him some mark o' respect. Robin Ruthven came in amang the thrang, to try to effect what he had promised; and, with the greatest readiness and simplicity, just took haud o' the side an' wide gown, an' in sight of a' present, held it aside as high as the preacher's knee, and behold, there was a pair o' cloven feet! The auld thief was fairly catched in the very height o' his proud conquest, an' put down by an auld carl. He could feign nae mair, but gnashing on Robin wi' his teeth, he dartit into the air like a fiery dragon, an' keust a reid rainbow our the taps o' the Lowmonds.

'"A' the auld wives an' weavers o' Auchtermuchty fell down flat wi' affright, an' betook them to their prayers aince again, for they saw the dreadfu' danger they had escapit, an' frae that day to this it is a hard matter to gar an Auchtermuchty man listen to a sermon at a', an' a harder ane still to gar him applaud ane, for he thinks aye that he sees the cloven foot peeping out frae aneath ilka sentence.

'"Now, this is a true story, my man," quo the auld wife; "an' whenever you are doubtfu' of a man, take auld Robin Ruthven's plan, an' look for the cloven foot, for it's a thing that winna weel hide; an' it appears whiles where ane wadna think o't. It will keek out frae aneath the parson's gown, the lawyer's wig, and the Cameronian's blue bannet; but still there is a gouden rule whereby to detect it, an' that never, never fails."—The auld witch didna gie me the rule, an' though I hae heard tell o't often an' often, shame fa' me an I ken what it is! But ye will ken it well, an' it wad be nae the waur of a trial on some o' your friends, maybe; for they say there's a certain gentleman seen walking wi' you whiles, that, wherever he sets his foot, the grass withers as gin it war scoudered wi' a het ern. His presence be about us! What's the matter wi' you, master? Are ye gaun to take the calm o' the stamock again?'

The truth is, that the clown's absurd story, with the still more ridiculous application, made me sick at heart a second time. It was not because I thought my illustrious friend was the devil, or that I took a fool's idle tale as a counterbalance to divine revelation, that had assured me of my justification in the sight of God before the existence of time. But, in short, it gave me a view of my own state, at which I shuddered, as indeed I now always did, when the image of my devoted friend and ruler presented itself to my mind. I often communed with my heart on this, and wondered how a connection, that had the well-being of mankind solely in view, could be productive of fruits so bitter. I then went to try my works by the Saviour's golden rule, as my servant had put it into my head to do; and, behold, not one of them would stand the test. I had shed blood on a ground on which I could not admit that any man had a right to shed mine; and I began to doubt the motives of my adviser once more, not that they were intentionally bad, but that his was some great mind led astray by enthusiasm, or some overpowering passion.

He seemed to comprehend every one of these motions of my heart, for his manner towards me altered every day. It first became any thing but agreeable, then supercilious, and finally, intolerable; so that I resolved to shake him off, cost what it would, even though I should be reduced to beg my bread in a foreign land. To do it at home was impossible, as he held my life in his hands, to sell it whenever he had a mind; and besides, his ascendancy over me was as complete as that of a huntsman over his dogs. I was even so weak, as, the next time I met with him, to look stedfastly at his foot, to see if it was not cloven into two hoofs. It was the foot of a gentleman, in every respect, so far as appearances went, but the form of his counsels was somewhat equivocal, and if not double, they were amazingly crooked.

But, if I had taken my measures to abscond and fly from my native place, in order to free myself of this tormenting, intolerant, and bloody reformer, he had likewise taken his to expel me, or throw me into the hands of justice. It seems, that about this time, I was haunted by some spies connected with my late father and brother, of whom the mistress of the former was one. My brother's death had been witnessed by two individuals; indeed, I always had an impression that it was witnessed by more than one, having some faint recollection of hearing voices and challenges close beside me; and this woman had searched about until she found these people; but, as I shrewdly suspected, not without the assistance of the only person in my secret,—my own warm and devoted friend. I say this, because I found that he had them concealed in the neighbourhood, and then took me again and again where I was fully exposed to their view, without being aware. One time in particular, on pretence of gratifying my revenge on that base woman, he knew so well where she lay concealed, that he led me to her, and left me to the mercy of two viragos, who had very nigh taken my life. My time of residence at Dalcastle was wearing to a crisis. I could no longer live with my tyrant, who haunted me like my shadow; and besides, it seems there were proofs of murder leading against me from all quarters. Of part of these I deemed myself quite free, but the world deemed otherwise; and how the matter would have gone, God only knows, for, the case never having undergone a judicial trial, I do not. It perhaps, however, behoves me here to relate all that I know

of it, and it is simply this:

On the first of June 1712, (well may I remember the day,) I was sitting locked in my secret chamber, in a state of the utmost despondency, revolving in my mind what I ought to do to be free of my persecutors, and wishing myself a worm, or a moth, that I might be crushed and at rest, when behold Samuel entered, with eyes like to start out of his head, exclaiming, 'For God's sake, master, fly and hide yourself, for your mother's found, an' as sure as you're a living soul, the blame is gaun to fa' on you!'

'My mother found!' said I. 'And, pray, where has she been all this while?' In the mean time, I was terribly discomposed at the thoughts of her return.

'Been, sir! Been? Why, she has been where ye pat her, it seems,—lying buried in the sands o' the linn. I can tell you, ye will see her a frightsome figure, sic as I never wish to see again. An' the young lady is found too, sir: an' it is said the devil—I beg pardon sir, *your friend*, I mean,—it is said your *friend* has made the discovery, an' the folk are away to raise officers, an' they will be here in an hour or two at the farthest, sir; an' sae you hae not a minute to lose, for there's proof, sir, strong proof, an' sworn proof, that ye were last seen wi' them baith; sae, unless ye can gie a' the better an account o' baith yoursel an' them, either hide, or flee for your bare life.'

'I will neither hide nor fly,' said I; 'for I am as guiltless of the blood of these women as the child unborn.'

'The country disna think sae, master; an' I can assure you, that should evidence fail, you run a risk o' being torn limb frae limb. They are bringing the corpse here, to gar ye touch them baith afore witnesses, an' plenty o' witnesses there will be!'

'They shall not bring them here,' cried I, shocked beyond measure at the experiment about to be made: 'Go, instantly, and debar them from entering my gate with their bloated and mangled carcases.'

'The body of your own mother, sir!' said the fellow emphatically. I was in terrible agitation; and, being driven to my wit's end, I got up and strode furiously round an' round the room. Samuel wist not what to do, but I saw by his staring he deemed me doubly guilty. A tap came to the chamber door: we both started like guilty creatures; and as for Samuel, his hairs stood all on end with alarm, so that when I motioned to him, he could scarcely advance to open the door. He did so at length, and who should enter but my illustrious friend, manifestly in the utmost state of alarm. The moment that Samuel admitted him, the former made his escape by the prince's side as he entered, seemingly in a state of distraction. I was little better, when I saw this dreaded personage enter my chamber, which he had never before attempted; and being unable to ask his errand, I suppose I stood and gazed on him like a statue.

'I come with sad and tormenting tidings to you, my beloved and ungrateful friend,' said he; 'but having only a minute left to save your life, I have come to attempt it. There is a mob coming towards you with two dead bodies, which will place you in circumstances disagreeable enough: but that is not the worst, for of that you may be able to clear yourself. At this moment there is a party of officers, with a Justiciary warrant from Edinburgh, surrounding the house, and about to begin the search of it, for you. If you fall into their hands, you are inevitably lost; for I have been making earnest inquiries, and find that every thing is in train for your ruin.'

'Ay, and who has been the cause of all this?' said I, with great bitterness. But he stopped me short, adding, 'There is no time for such reflections at present: I gave you my word of honour that your life should be safe from the hand of man. So it shall, if the power remain with me to save it. I am come to redeem my pledge, and to save your life by the sacrifice of my own. Here,—Not one word of expostulation, change habits with me, and you may then pass by the officers, and guards, and even through the approaching mob, with the most perfect temerity. There is a virtue in this garb, and instead of offering to detain you, they shall pay you obeisance. Make haste, and leave this place for the present, flying where you best may, and if I escape from these dangers that surround me, I will endeavour to find you out, and bring you what intelligence I am able.

I put on his green frock coat, buff belt, and a sort of a turban that he always wore on his head, somewhat resembling a bishop's mitre: he drew his hand thrice across my face, and I withdrew as he continued to urge me. My hall door and postern gate were both strongly guarded, and there were sundry armed people within, searching the closets; but all of them made way for me, and lifted their caps as I passed by them. Only one superior officer accosted me, asking if I had seen the culprit? I knew not what answer to make, but chanced to say, with great truth and propriety, 'He is safe enough.' The man beckoned with a smile, as much as to say, 'Thank you, sir, that is quite sufficient;' and I walked deliberately away.

I had not well left the gate, till, hearing a great noise coming from the deep glen toward the east, I turned that way, deeming myself quite secure in this my new disguise, to see what it was, and if matters were as had been described to me. There I met a great mob, sure enough, coming with two dead bodies

stretched on boards, and decently covered with white sheets. I would fain have examined their appearance, had I not perceived the apparent fury in the looks of the men, and judged from that how much more safe it was for me not to intermeddle in the affray. I cannot tell how it was, but I felt a strange and unwonted delight in viewing this scene, and a certain pride of heart in being supposed the perpetrator of the unnatural crimes laid to my charge. This was a feeling quite new to me; and if there were virtues in the robes of the illustrious foreigner, who had without all dispute preserved my life at this time; I say, if there was any inherent virtue in these robes of his, as he had suggested, this was one of their effects, that they turned my heart towards that which was evil, horrible, and disgustful.

I mixed with the mob to hear what they were saying. Every tongue was engaged in loading me with the most opprobrious epithets! One called me a monster of nature; another an incarnate devil; and another a creature made to be cursed in time and eternity. I retired from them, and winded my way southward, comforting myself with the assurance, that so mankind had used and persecuted the greatest fathers and apostles of the Christian church, and that their vile opprobrium could not alter the counsels of heaven concerning me.

On going over that rising ground called Dorington Moor, I could not help turning round and taking a look of Dalcastle. I had little doubt that it would be my last look, and nearly as little ambition that it should not. I thought how high my hopes of happiness and advancement had been on entering that mansion, and taking possession of its rich and extensive domains, and how miserably I had been disappointed. On the contrary, I had experienced nothing but chagrin, disgust, and terror; and I now consoled myself with the hope that I should henceforth shake myself free of the chains of my great tormentor, and for that privilege was I willing to encounter any earthly distress. I could not help perceiving, that I was now on a path which was likely to lead me into a species of distress hitherto unknown, and hardly dreamed of by me, and that was total destitution. For all the riches I had been possessed of a few hours previous to this, I found that here I was turned out of my lordly possessions without a single merk, or the power of lifting and commanding the smallest sum, without being thereby discovered and seized. Had it been possible for me to have escaped in my own clothes, I had a considerable sum secreted in these, but, by the sudden change, I was left without a coin for present necessity. But I had hope in heaven, knowing that the just man would not be left destitute; and that though many troubles surrounded him, he would at last be set free from them all. I was possessed of strong and brilliant parts, and a liberal education; and though I had somehow unaccountably suffered my theological qualifications to fall into desuetude, since my acquaintance with the ablest and most rigid of all theologians, I had nevertheless hopes that, by preaching up redemption by grace, pre-ordination, and eternal purpose, I should yet be enabled to benefit mankind in some country, and rise to high distinction.

These were some of the thoughts by which I consoled myself as I posted on my way southward, avoiding the towns and villages, and falling into the cross ways that led from each of the great roads passing east and west, to another. I lodged the first night in the house of a country weaver, into which I stepped at a late hour, quite overcome with hunger and fatigue, having travelled not less than thirty miles from my late home. The man received me ungraciously, telling me of a gentleman's house at no great distance, and of an inn a little farther away; but I said I delighted more in the society of a man like him, than that of any gentleman of the land, for my concerns were with the poor of this world, it being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The weaver's wife, who sat with a child on her knee, and had not hitherto opened her mouth, hearing me speak in that serious and religious style, stirred up the fire, with her one hand; then drawing a chair near it, she said, 'Come awa, honest lad, in by here: sin' it be sae that you belang to Him wha gies us a' that we hae, it is but right that you should share a part. You are a stranger, it is true, but *them* that winna entertain a stranger will never entertain an angel unawares.'

I never was apt to be taken with the simplicity of nature; in general I despised it; but, owing to my circumstances at the time, I was deeply affected by the manner of this poor woman's welcome. The weaver continued in a churlish mood throughout the evening, apparently dissatisfied with what his wife had done in entertaining me, and spoke to her in a manner so crusty that I thought proper to rebuke him, for the woman was comely in her person, and virtuous in her conversation; but the weaver her husband was large of make, ill-favoured, and pestilent; therefore did I take him severely to task for the tenor of his conduct; but the man was froward, and answered me rudely; with sneering and derision, and, in the height of his caprice, he said to his wife, 'Whan focks are sae keen of a chance o' entertaining angels, gudewife, it wad maybe be worth their while to tak tent what kind o' angels they are. It wadna wonder me vera muckle an ye had entertained your friend the deil the night, for aw thought aw fand a saur o' reek an' brimstane about him. *He's* nane o' the best o' angels, an' focks winna hae muckle credit by entertaining him.'

Certainly, in the assured state I was in, I had as little reason to be alarmed at mention being made of the devil as any person on earth: of late, however, I felt that the reverse was the case, and that any allusion to my great enemy, moved me exceedingly. The weaver's speech had such an effect on me, that both he and his wife were alarmed at my looks. The latter thought I was angry, and chided her husband gently for his rudeness; but the weaver himself rather seemed to be confirmed in his opinion that I was the devil, for he looked round like a startled roe-buck, and immediately betook him to the family Bible.

I know not whether it was on purpose to prove my identity or not, but I think he was going to desire me either to read a certain portion of Scripture that he had sought out, or to make family worship, had not the conversation at that instant taken another turn; for the weaver, not knowing how to address me, abruptly asked my name, as he was about to put the Bible into my hands. Never having considered myself in the light of a malefactor, but rather as a champion in the cause of truth, and finding myself perfectly safe under my disguise, I had never once thought of the utility of changing my name, and when the man asked me, I hesitated; but being compelled to say something, I said my name was Cowan. The man stared at me, and then at his wife, with a look that spoke a knowledge of something alarming or mysterious.

'Ha! Cowan?' said he. 'That's most extrordinar! Not Colwan, I hope?'

'No: Cowan is my sirname,' said I. 'But why not Colwan, there being so little difference in the sound?'

'I was feared ye might be that waratch that the deil has taen the possession o', an' eggit him on to kill baith his father an' his mother, his only brother, an' his sweetheart,' said he: 'an'to say the truth, I'm no that sure about you yet, for I see you're gaun wi' arms on ye.'

'Not I, honest man,' said I: 'I carry no arms; a man conscious of his innocence and uprightness of heart, needs not to carry arms in his defence now.'

'Ay, ay, maister,' said he; 'an' pray what div ye ca' this bit windlestrae that's appearing here?' With that he pointed to something on the inside of the breast of my frock-coat. I looked at it, and there certainly was the gilded haft of a poniard, the same weapon I had seen and handled before, and which I knew my illustrious companion always carried about with him; but till that moment I knew not that I was in possession of it. I drew it out: a more dangerous or insidious looking weapon could not be conceived. The weaver and his wife were both frightened, the latter in particular; and she being my friend, and I dependant on their hospitality, for that night, I said, 'I declare I knew not that I carried this small rapier, which has been in my coat by chance, and not by any design of mine. But lest you should think that I meditate any mischief to any under this roof, I give it into your hands, requesting of you to lock it by till tomorrow, or when I shall next want it.'

The woman seemed rather glad to get hold of it; and, taking it from me, she went into a kind of pantry out of my sight, and locked the weapon up; and then the discourse went on.

'There cannot be such a thing in reality,' said I, 'as the story you were mentioning just now, of a man whose name resembles mine.'

'It's likely that you ken a wee better about the story than I do, maister,' said he, 'suppose you do leave the *L* out of your name. An' yet I think sic a waratch, an' a murderer, wad hae taen a name wi' some gritter difference in the sound. But the story is just that true, that there were twa o' the Queen's officers here nae mair than an hour ago, in pursuit o' the vagabond, for they gat some intelligence that he had fled this gate; yet they said he had been last seen wi' black claes on, an' they supposed he was clad in black. His ain servant is wi' them, for the purpose o' kennin the scoundrel, an' they're galloping through the country like mad-men. I hope in God they'll get him, an' rack his neck for him!'

I could not say *Amen* to the weaver's prayer, and therefore tried to compose myself as well as I could, and made some religious comment on the causes of the nation's depravity. But suspecting that my potent friend had betrayed my flight and disguise, to save his life, I was very uneasy, and gave myself up for lost. I said prayers in the family, with the tenor of which the wife was delighted, but the weaver still dissatisfied; and, after a supper of the most homely fare, he tried to start an argument with me, proving, that every thing for which I had interceded in my prayer, was irrelevant to man's present state. But I, being weary and distressed in mind, shunned the contest, and requested a couch whereon to repose.

I was conducted into the other end of the house, among looms, treadles, pirns, and confusion without end; and there, in a sort of box, was I shut up for my night's repose, for the weaver, as he left me, cautiously turned the key of my apartment, and left me to shift for myself among the looms, determined that I should escape from the house with nothing. After he and his wife and children were crowded into their den, I heard the two mates contending furiously about me in suppressed voices, the one maintaining the probability that I was the murderer, and the other proving the impossibility of it. The husband, however, said as much as let me understand, that he had locked me up on purpose to bring the military, or officers of justice, to seize me. I was in the utmost perplexity, yet, for all that, and the imminent

danger I was in, I fell asleep, and a more troubled and tormenting sleep never enchained a mortal frame. I had such dreams that they will not bear repetition, and early in the morning I awaked, feverish, and parched with thirst.

I went to call mine host, that he might let me out to the open air, but before doing so, I thought it necessary to put on some clothes. In attempting to do this, a circumstance arrested my attention, (for which I could in nowise account, which to this day I cannot unriddle, nor shall I ever be able to comprehend it while I live,) the frock and turban, which had furnished my disguise on the preceding day, were both removed, and my own black coat and cocked hat laid down in their place. At first I thought I was in a dream, and felt the weaver's beam, web, and treadle-strings with my hands, to convince myself that I was awake. I was certainly awake; and there was the door locked firm and fast as it was the evening before. I carried my own black coat to the small window, and examined it. It was my own in verity; and the sums of money, that I had concealed in case of any emergency, remained untouched. I trembled with astonishment; and on my return from the small window, went doiting in amongst the weaver's looms, till I entangled myself, and could not get out again without working great deray amongst the coarse linen threads that stood in warp from one end of the apartment unto the other. I had no knife whereby to cut the cords of this wicked man, and therefore was obliged to call out lustily for assistance. The weaver came half naked, unlocked the door, and, setting in his head and long neck, accosted me thus:

'What now, Mr Satan? What for are ye roaring that gate? Are you fawn inna little hell, instead o' the big muckil ane? Deil be in your reistit trams! What for have ye abscondit yoursel into ma leddy's wab for?'

'Friend, I beg your pardon,' said I: 'I wanted to be at the light, and have somehow unfortunately involved myself in the intricacies of your web, from which I cannot get clear without doing you a great injury. Pray do, lend your experienced hand to extricate me.'

'May aw the pearls o' damnation light on your silly snout, an I dinna estricat ye weel enough! Ye ditit, donnart, deil's burd that ye be! what made ye gang howkin in there to be a poor man's ruin? Come out, ye vile rag-of-a-muffin, or I gar ye come out wi' mair shame and disgrace, an' fewer haill banes in your body.'

My feet had slipped down through the double warpings of a web, and not being able to reach the ground with them, (there being a small pit below,) I rode upon a number of yielding threads, and there being nothing else that I could reach, to extricate myself was impossible. I was utterly powerless; and besides, the yarn and cords hurt me very much. For all that, the destructive weaver seized a loomspoke, and began a-beating me most unmercifully, while, entangled as I was, I could do nothing but shout aloud for mercy, or assistance, whichever chanced to be within hearing. The latter, at length, made its appearance, in the form of the weaver's wife, in the same state of dishabille with himself, who instantly interfered, and that most strenuously, on my behalf. Before her arrival, however, I had made a desperate effort to throw myself out of the entanglement I was in; for the weaver continued repeating his blows and cursing me so, that I determined to get out of his meshes at any risk. This effect made my case worse; for my feet being wrapt among the nether threads, as I threw myself from my saddle on the upper ones, my feet brought the others up through these, and I hung with my head down, and my feet as firm as they had been in a vice. The predicament of the web being thereby increased, the weaver's wrath was doubled in proportion, and he laid on without mercy.

At this critical juncture the wife arrived, and without hesitation rushed before her offended lord, withholding his hand from injuring me farther, although then it was uplifted along with the loomspoke in overbearing ire. 'Dear Johnny! I think ye be gaen dementit this morning. Be quiet, my dear, an' dinna begin a Boddel Brigg business in your ain house. What for ir ye persecutin' a servant o' the Lord's that gate, an' pitting the life out o' him wi' his head down an' his heels up?'

'Had ye said a servant o' the deil's, Nans, ye wad hae been nearer the nail, for gin he binna the auld ane himsel, he's gayan sib till him. There, didna I lock him in on purpose to bring the military on him; an' in place o' that, hasna he keepit me in a sleep a' this while as deep as death? An' here do I find him abscondit like a speeder i' the mids o' my leddy's wab, an' me dreamin' a' the night that I had the deil i' my house, an' that he was clapper-clawin me ayont the loom. Have at you, ye brunstane thief!' and, in spite of the good woman's struggles, he lent me another severe blow.

'Now, Johnny Dods, my man! O Johnny Dods, think if that be like a Christian, and ane o' the heroes o' Boddel Brigg, to entertain a stranger, an' then bind him in a web wi' his head down, an' mell him to death! O Johnny Dods, think what you are about! Slack a pin, an' let the good honest religious lad out.'

The weaver was rather overcome, but still stood to his point that I was the deil, though in better temper; and as he slackened the web to release me, he remarked, half laughing, 'Wha wad hae thought

that John Dods should hae escapit a' the snares an' dangers that circumfauldit him, an' at last should hae weaved a net to catch the deil.'

The wife released me soon, and carefully whispered me, at the same time, that it would be as well for me to dress and be going. I was not long in obeying, and dressed myself in my black clothes, hardly knowing what I did, what to think, or whither to betake myself. I was sore hurt by the blows of the desperate ruffian; and, what was worse, my ankle was so much strained, that I could hardly set my foot to the ground. I was obliged to apply to the weaver once more, to see if I could learn any thing about my clothes, or how the change was effected. 'Sir,' said I, 'how comes it that you have robbed me of my clothes, and put these down in their place over night?'

'Ha! thae claes? Me pit down thae claes!' said he, gaping with astonishment, and touching the clothes with the point of his fore-finger; 'I never saw them afore, as I have death to meet wi': So help me God!'

He strode into the work-house where I slept, to satisfy himself that my clothes were not there, and returned perfectly aghast with consternation. 'The doors were baith fast lockit,' said he. 'I could hae defied a rat either to hae gotten out or in. My dream has been true! My dream has been true! The Lord judge between thee and me; but, in his name, I charge you to depart out o' this house; an', gin it be your will, dinna tak the braidside o't w'ye, but gang quietly out at the door wi' your face foremost. Wife, let nought o' this enchanter's remain i' the house, to be a curse, an' a snare to us; gang an' bring him his gildit weapon, an' may the Lord protect a' his ain against its hellish an' deadly point!'

The wife went to seek my poniard, trembling so excessively that she could hardly walk, and shortly after, we heard a feeble scream from the pantry. The weapon had disappeared with the clothes, though under double lock and key; and the terror of the good people having now reached a disgusting extremity, I thought proper to make a sudden retreat, followed by the weaver's anathemas.

My state both of body and mind was now truly deplorable. I was hungry, wounded, and lame; an outcast and a vagabond in society; my life sought after with avidity, and all for doing that to which I was predestined by him who fore-ordains whatever comes to pass. I knew not whither to betake me. I had purposed going into England, and there making some use of the classical education I had received, but my lameness rendered this impracticable for the present. I was therefore obliged to turn my face towards Edinburgh, where I was little known—where concealment was more practicable than by skulking in the country, and where I might turn my mind to something that was great and good. I had a little money, both Scots and English, now in my possession, but not one friend in the whole world on whom I could rely. One devoted friend, it is true, I had, but he was become my greatest terror. To escape from him, I now felt that I would willingly travel to the farthest corners of the world, and be subjected to every deprivation; but after the certainty of what had taken place last night, after I had travelled thirty miles by secret and bye-ways, I saw not how escape from him was possible.

Miserable, forlorn, and dreading every person that I saw, either behind or before me, I hasted on towards Edinburgh, taking all the bye and unfrequented paths; and the third night after I left the weaver's house, I reached the West Port, without meeting with any thing remarkable. Being exceedingly fatigued and lame, I took lodgings in the first house I entered, and for these I was to pay two groats a-week, and to board and sleep with a young man who wanted a companion to make his rent easier. I liked this; having found from experience, that the great personage who had attached himself to me, and was now become my greatest terror among many surrounding evils, generally haunted me when I was alone, keeping aloof from all other society.

My fellow lodger came home in the evening, and was glad at my coming. His name was Linton, and I changed mine to Elliot. He was a flippant unstable being, one to whom nothing appeared a difficulty, in his own estimation, but who could effect very little, after all. He was what is called by some a compositor, in the Queen's printing house, then conducted by a Mr James Watson. In the course of our conversation that night, I told him that I was a first-rate classical scholar, and would gladly turn my attention to some business wherein my education might avail me something; and that there was nothing would delight me so much as an engagement in the Queen's printing office. Linton made no difficulty in bringing about that arrangement. His answer was. 'Oo, gud sir, you are the very man we want. Gud bless your breast and your buttons, sir! Ay, that's neither here nor there—That's all very well—Ha-ha-ha—A byeword in the house, sir. But, as I was saying, you are the very *man* we want—You will get any money you like to ask, sir—*Any* money you like, sir. God bless your buttons!—That's settled—All done—Settled, settled—I'll do it, I'll do it—No more about it; no more about it. Settled, settled.'

The next day I went with him to the office, and he presented me to Mr Watson as the most wonderful genius and scholar ever known. His recommendation had little sway with Mr Watson, who only smiled at Linton's extravagancies, as one does at the prattle of an infant. I sauntered about the printing office for the space of two or three hours, during which time Watson bustled about with green spectacles on his

nose, and took no heed of me. But seeing that I still lingered, he addressed me at length, in a civil gentlemanly way, and inquired concerning my views. I satisfied him with all my answers, in particular those to his questions about the Latin and Greek languages; but when he came to ask testimonials of my character and acquirements, and found that I could produce none, he viewed me with a jealous eye, and said he dreaded I was some ne'er-do-weel, run from my parents or guardians, and he did not chuse to employ any such. I said my parents were both dead; and that being thereby deprived of the means of following out my education, it behoved me to apply to some business in which my education might be of some use to me. He said he would take me into the office, and pay me according to the business I performed, and the manner in which I deported myself; but he could take no man into her Majesty's printing office upon a regular engagement, who could not produce the most respectable references with regard to morals.

I could not but despise the man in my heart who laid such a stress upon morals, leaving grace out of the question; and viewed it as a deplorable instance of human depravity and self conceit; but for all that, I was obliged to accept of his terms, for I had an inward thirst and longing to distinguish myself in the great cause of religion, and I thought if once I could print my own works, how I would astonish mankind, and confound their self wisdom and their esteemed morality—blow up the idea of any dependence on good works, and *morality*, forsooth! And I weened that I might thus get me a name even higher than if I had been made a general of the Czar Peter's troops against the infidels.

I attended the office some hours every day, but got not much encouragement, though I was eager to learn every thing, and could soon have set types considerably well. It was here that I first conceived the idea of writing this journal, and having it printed, and applied to Mr Watson to print it for me, telling him it was a religious parable such as the Pilgrim's Progress. He advised me to print it close, and make it a pamphlet, and then if it did not sell, it would not cost me much; but that religious pamphlets, especially if they had a shade of allegory in them, were the very rage of the day. I put my work to the press, and wrote early and late; and encouraging my companion to work at odd hours, and on Sundays, before the press-work of the second sheet was begun, we had the work all in types, corrected, and a clean copy thrown off for farther revisal. The first sheet was wrought off; and I never shall forget how my heart exulted when at the printing house this day, I saw what numbers of my works were to go abroad among mankind, and I determined with myself that I would not put the Border name of Elliot, which I had assumed, to the work.

Thus far have my History and Confessions been carried.

I must now furnish my Christian readers with a key to the process, management, and winding up of the whole matter; which I propose, by the assistance of God, to limit to a very few pages.

Chesters, July 27, 1712—My hopes and prospects are a wreck. My precious journal is lost! consigned to the flames! My enemy hath found me out, and there is no hope of peace or rest for me on this side the grave.

In the beginning of the last week, my fellow lodger came home, running in a great panic, and told me a story of the devil having appeared twice in the printing house, assisting the workmen at the printing of my book, and that some of them had been frightened out of their wits. That the story was told to Mr Watson, who till that time had never paid any attention to the treatise, but who, out of curiosity, began and read a part of it, and thereupon flew into a great rage, called my work a medley of lies and blasphemy, and ordered the whole to be consigned to the flames, blaming his foreman, and all connected with the press, for letting a work go so far, that was enough to bring down the vengeance of heaven on the concern.

If ever I shed tears through perfect bitterness of spirit it was at that time, but I hope it was more for the ignorance and folly of my countrymen than the overthrow of my own hopes. But my attention was suddenly aroused to other matters, by Linton mentioning that it was said by some in the office the devil had inquired for me.

'Surely you are not such a fool,' said I, 'as to believe that the devil really was in the printing office?'

'Oo, gud bless you sir! saw him myself, gave him a nod, and good-day. Rather a gentlemanly personage—Green Circassian hunting coat and turban—Like a foreigner—Has the power of vanishing in one moment though—Rather a suspicious circumstance that. Otherwise, his appearance not much against him.'

If the former intelligence thrilled me with grief, this did so with terror. I perceived who the personage was that had visited the printing house in order to further the progress of my work; and at the approach

of every person to our lodgings, I from that instant trembled every bone, lest it should be my elevated and dreaded friend. I could not say I had ever received an office at his hand that was not friendly, yet these offices had been of a strange tendency; and the horror with which I now regarded him was unaccountable to myself. It was beyond description, conception, or the soul of man to bear. I took my printed sheets, the only copy of my unfinished work existing; and, on pretence of going straight to Mr Watson's office, decamped from my lodgings at Portsburgh a little before the fall of evening, and took the road towards England.

As soon as I got clear of the city, I ran with a velocity I knew not before I had been capable of. I flew out the way towards Dalkeith so swiftly, that I often lost sight of the ground, and I said to myself, 'O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly to the farthest corners of the earth, to hide me from those against whom I have no power to stand!'

I travelled all that night and the next morning, exerting myself beyond my power; and about noon the following day I went into a yeoman's house, the name of which was Ellanshaws, and requested of the people a couch of any sort to lie down on, for I was ill, and could not proceed on my journey. They showed me to a stable-loft where there were two beds, on one of which I laid me down; and, falling into a sound sleep, I did not awake till the evening, that other three men came from the fields to sleep in the same place, one of whom lay down beside me, at which I was exceedingly glad. They fell all sound asleep, and I was terribly alarmed at a conversation I overheard somewhere outside the stable. I could not make out a sentence, but trembled to think I knew one of the voices at least, and rather than not be mistaken, I would that any man had run me through with a sword. I fell into a cold sweat, and once thought of instantly putting hand to my own life, as my only means of relief,(May the rash and sinful thought be in mercy forgiven!) when I heard as it were two persons at the door, contending, as I thought, about their right and interest in me. That the one was forcibly preventing the admission of the other, I could hear distinctly, and their language was mixed with something dreadful and mysterious. In an agony of terror, I awakened my snoring companion with great difficulty, and asked him, in a low whisper, who these were at the door? The man lay silent, and listening, till fairly awake, and then asked if I had heard any thing? I said I had heard strange voices contending at the door.

'Then I can tell you, lad, it has been something neither good nor canny,' said he: 'It's no for naething that our horses are snorking that gate.'

For the first time, I remarked that the animals were snorting and rearing as if they wished to break through the house. The man called to them by their names, and ordered them to be quiet; but they raged still the more furiously. He then roused his drowsy companions, who were alike alarmed at the panic of the horses, all of them declaring that they had never seen either Mause or Jolly start in their lives before. My bed-fellow and another then ventured down the ladder, and I heard one of them then saying, 'Lord be wi' us! What can be i' the house? The sweat's rinning off the poor beasts like water.'

They agreed to sally out together, and if possible to reach the kitchen and bring a light. I was glad at this, but not so much so when I heard the one man saying to the other, in a whisper, 'I wish that stranger man may be canny enough.'

'God kens!' said the other: 'It doesnae look unco weel.'

The lad in the other bed, hearing this, set up his head in manifest affright as the other two departed for the kitchen; and, I believe, he would have been glad to have been in their company. This lad was next the ladder, at which I was extremely glad, for had he not been there, the world should not have induced me to wait the return of these two men. They were not well gone, before I heard another distinctly enter the stable, and come towards the ladder. The lad who was sitting up in his bed, intent on the watch, called out, 'Wha's that there? Walker, is that you? Purdie, I say, is it you?'

The darkling intruder paused for a few moments, and then came towards the foot of the ladder. The horses broke loose, and snorting and neighing for terror, raged through the house. In all my life I never heard so frightful a commotion. The being that occasioned it all, now began to mount the ladder toward our loft, on which the lad in the bed next the ladder sprung from his couch, crying out, 'the L—d A—y preserve us! what can it be?' With that he sped across the loft, and by my bed, praying lustily all the way; and, throwing himself from the other end of the loft into a manger, he darted, naked as he was, through among the furious horses, and making the door, that stood open, in a moment he vanished and left me in the lurch. Powerless with terror, and calling out fearfully, I tried to follow his example; but not knowing the situation of the places with regard to one another, I missed the manger, and fell on the pavement in one of the stalls. I was both stunned and lamed on the knee; but terror prevailing, I got up and tried to escape. It was out of my power; for there were divisions and cross divisions in the house, and mad horses smashing every thing before them, so that I knew not so much as on what side of the house the door was. Two or three times was I knocked down by the animals, but all the while I never stinted crying out with

all my power. At length, I was seized by the throat and hair of the head, and dragged away, I wist not whither. My voice was now laid, and all my powers, both mental and bodily, totally overcome; and I remember no more till I found myself lying naked on the kitchen table of the farm house, and something like a horse's rug thrown over me. The only hint that I got from the people of the house on coming to myself was, that my absence would be good company; and that they had got me in a woful state, one which they did not chuse to describe, or hear described.

As soon as day-light appeared, I was packed about my business, with the hisses and execrations of the yeoman's family, who viewed me as a being to be shunned, ascribing to me the visitations of that unholy night. Again was I on my way southward, as lonely, hopeless, and degraded a being as was to be found on life's weary round. As I limped out the way, I wept, thinking of what I might have been, and what I really had become: of my high and flourishing hopes, when I set out as the avenger of God on the sinful children of men; of all that I had dared for the exaltation and progress of the truth; and it was with great difficulty that my faith remained unshaken, yet was I preserved from that sin, and comforted myself with the certainty, that the believer's progress through life is one of warfare and suffering.

My case was indeed a pitiable one. I was lame, hungry, fatigued, and my resources on the very eve of being exhausted. Yet these were but secondary miseries, and hardly worthy of a thought, compared with those I suffered inwardly. I not only looked around me with terror at every one that approached, but I was become a terror to myself; or rather, my body and soul were become terrors to each other; and, had it been possible, I felt as if they would have gone to war. I dared not look at my face in a glass, for I shuddered at my own image and likeness. I dreaded the dawning, and trembled at the approach of night, nor was there one thing in nature that afforded me the least delight.

In this deplorable state of body and mind, was I jogging on towards the Tweed, by the side of the small river called Ellan, when, just at the narrowest part of the glen, whom should I meet full in the face, but the very being in all the universe of God I would the most gladly have shunned. I had no power to fly from him, neither durst I, for the spirit within me, accuse him of falsehood, and renounce his fellowship. I stood before him like a condemned criminal, staring him in the face, ready to be winded, twisted, and tormented as he pleased. He regarded me with a sad and solemn look. How changed was now that majestic countenance, to one of haggard despair—changed in all save the extraordinary likeness to my late brother, a resemblance which misfortune and despair tended only to heighten. There were no kind greetings passed between us at meeting, like those which pass between the men of the world; he looked on me with eyes that froze the currents of my blood, but spoke not, till I assumed as much courage as to articulate—'You here! I hope you have brought me tidings of comfort?'

'Tidings of despair!' said he. 'But such tidings as the timid and the ungrateful deserve, and have reason to expect. You are an outlaw, and a vagabond in your country, and a high reward is offered for your apprehension. The enraged populace have burnt your house, and all that is within it; and the farmers on the land bless themselves at being rid of you. So fare it with every one who puts his hand to the great work of man's restoration to freedom, and draweth back, contemning the light that is within him! Your enormities caused me to leave you to yourself for a season, and you see what the issue has been. You have given some evil ones power over you, who long to devour you, both soul and body, and it has required all my power and influence to save you. Had it not been for my hand, you had been torn in pieces last night; but for once I prevailed. We must leave this land forth-with, for here there is neither peace, safety, nor comfort for us. Do you now, and here, pledge yourself to one who has so often saved your life, and has put his own at stake to do so? Do you pledge yourself that you will henceforth be guided by my counsel, and follow me whithersoever I chuse to lead?'

'I have always been swayed by your counsel,' said I, 'and for your sake, principally, am I sorry, that all our measures have proved abortive. But I hope still to be useful in my native isle, therefore let me plead that your highness will abandon a poor despised and outcast wretch to his fate, and betake you to your realms, where your presence cannot but be greatly wanted.'

'Would that I could do so!' said he wofully. 'But to talk of that is to talk of an impossibility. I am wedded to you so closely, that I feel as if I were the same person. Our essences are one, our bodies and spirits being united, so, that I am drawn towards you as by magnestism, and wherever you are, there must my presence be with you.'

Perceiving how this assurance affected me, he began to chide me most bitterly for my ingratitude; and then he assumed such looks, that it was impossible for me longer to bear them; therefore I staggered out the way, begging and beseeching of him to give me up to my fate, and hardly knowing what I said; for it struck me, that, with all his assumed appearance of misery and wretchedness, there were traits of exultation in his hideous countenance, manifesting a secret and inward joy at my utter despair.

It was long before I durst look over my shoulder, but when I did so, I perceived this ruined and debased

potentate coming slowly on the same path, and I prayed that the Lord would hide me in the bowels of the earth, or depths of the sea. When I crossed the Tweed, I perceived him still a little behind me; and my despair being then at its height, I cursed the time I first met with such a tormentor; though, on a little recollection it occurred, that it was at that blessed time when I was solemnly dedicated to the Lord, and assured of my final election, and confirmation, by an eternal decree never to be annulled. This being my sole and only comfort, I recalled my curse upon the time, and repented me of my rashness.

After crossing the Tweed, I saw no more of my persecutor that day, and had hopes that he had left me for a season; but, alas, what hope was there of my relief after the declaration I had so lately heard! I took up my lodgings that night in a small miserable inn in the village of Ancrum, of which the people seemed alike poor and ignorant. Before going to bed, I asked if it was customary with them to have family worship of evenings? The man answered, that they were so hard set with the world, they often could not get time, but if I would be so kind as officiate they would be much obliged to me. I accepted the invitation, being afraid to go to rest lest the commotions of the foregoing night might be renewed, and continued the worship as long as in decency I could. The poor people thanked me, hoped my prayers would be heard both on their account and my own, seemed much taken with my abilities, and wondered how a man of my powerful eloquence chanced to be wandering about in a condition so forlorn. I said I was a poor student of theology, on my way to Oxford. They stared at one another with expressions of wonder, disappointment, and fear. I afterwards came to learn, that the term *theology* was by them quite misunderstood, and that they had some crude conceptions that nothing was taught at Oxford but the *black arts*, which ridiculous idea prevailed over all the south of Scotland. For the present I could not understand what the people meant, and less so, when the man asked me, with deep concern, 'If I was serious in my intentions of going to Oxford? He hoped not, and that I would be better guided.'

I said my education wanted finishing;—but he remarked, that the Oxford arts were a bad finish for a religious man's education.—Finally, I requested him to sleep with me, or in my room all the night, as I wanted some serious and religious conversation with him, and likewise to convince him that the study of the fine arts, though not absolutely necessary, were not incompatible with the character of a Christian divine. He shook his head, and wondered how I could call them *fine arts*—hoped I did not mean to convince him by any ocular demonstration, and at length reluctantly condescended to sleep with me, and let the lass and wife sleep together for one night. I believe he would have declined it, had it not been some hints from his wife, stating, that it was a good arrangement, by which I understood there were only two beds in the house, and that when I was preferred to the lass's bed, she had one to shift for.

The landlord and I accordingly retired to our homely bed, and conversed for some time about indifferent matters, till he fell sound asleep. Not so with me: I had that within which would not suffer me to close my eyes; and about the dead of night, I again heard the same noises and contention begin outside the house, as I had heard the night before; and again I heard it was about a sovereign and peculiar right in me. At one time the noise was on the top of the house, straight above our bed, as if the one party were breaking through the roof, and the other forcibly preventing it; at another time it was at the door, and at a third time at the window; but still mine host lay sound by my side, and did not waken. I was seized with terrors indefinable, and prayed fervently, but did not attempt rousing my sleeping companion until I saw if no better could be done. The women, however, were alarmed, and, rushing into our apartment, exclaimed that all the devils in hell were besieging the house. Then, indeed, the landlord awoke, and it was time for him, for the tumult had increased to such a degree, that it shook the house to its foundations, being louder and more furious than I could have conceived the heat of battle to be when the volleys of artillery are mixed with groans, shouts, and blasphemous cursing. It thundered and lightened; and there were screams, groans, laughter, and execrations, all intermingled.

I lay trembling and bathed in a cold perspiration, but was soon obliged to bestir myself, the inmates attacking me one after the other.

'O, Tam Douglas! Tam Douglas! haste ye an'rise out frayont that incarnal devil!' cried the wife: 'Ye are in ayont the auld ane himsel, for our lass Tibbie saw his cloven cloots last night.'

'Lord forbid!' roared Tam Douglas, and darted over the bed like a flying fish. Then, hearing the unearthly tumult with which he was surrounded, he returned to the side of the bed, and addressed me thus, with long and fearful intervals:

'If ye be the deil, rise up, an' depart in peace out o' this house—afore the bedstrae take kindling about ye, an' than it'll maybe be the waur for ye—Get up—an' gang awa out amang your cronies, like a good—lad—There's nae body here wishes you ony ill—D'ye hear me?'

'Friend,' said I, 'no Christian would turn out a fellow creature on such a night as this, and in the midst of such a commotion of the villagers.'

'Na, if ye be a mortal man,' said he, 'which I rather think, from the use you made of the holy book—

Nane o' your practical jokes on strangers an' honest foks. These are some o' your Oxford tricks, an' I'll thank you to be ower wi' them.—Gracious heaven, they are brikkin through the house at a' the four corners at the same time!'

The lass Tibby, seeing the innkeeper was not going to prevail with me to rise, flew toward the bed in desperation, and seizing me by the waist, soon landed me on the floor, saying: 'Be ye deil, be ye chiel, ye's no lie there till baith the house an' us be swallowed up!'

Her master and mistress applauding the deed, I was obliged to attempt dressing myself, a task to which my powers were quite inadequate in the state I was in, but I was readily assisted by every one of the three; and as soon as they got my clothes thrust on in a loose way, they shut their eyes lest they should see what might drive them distracted, and thrust me out to the street, cursing me, and calling on the fiends to take their prey and begone.

The scene that ensued is neither to be described, nor believed, if it were. I was momently surrounded by a number of hideous fiends, who gnashed on me with their teeth, and clenched their crimson paws in my face; and at the same instant I was seized by the collar of my coat behind, by my dreaded and devoted friend, who pushed me on, and, with his gilded rapier waving and brandishing around me, defended me against all their united attacks. Horrible as my assailants were in appearance, (and they had all monstrous shapes,) I felt that I would rather have fallen into their hands, than be thus led away captive by my defender at his will and pleasure, without having the right or power to say my life, or any part of my will, was my own. I could not even thank him for his potent guardianship, but hung down my head, and moved on I knew not whither, like a criminal led to execution, and still the infernal combat continued, till about the dawning, at which time I looked up, and all the fiends were expelled but one, who kept at a distance; and still my persecutor and defender pushed me by the neck before him.

At length he desired me to sit down and take some rest, with which I complied, for I had great need of it, and wanted the power to withstand what he desired. There, for a whole morning did he detain me, tormenting me with reflections on the past, and pointing out the horrors of the future, until a thousand times I wished myself non-existent. 'I have attached myself to your wayward fortune,' said he; 'and it has been my ruin as well as thine. Ungrateful as you are, I cannot give you up to be devoured; but this is a life that it is impossible to brook longer. Since our hopes are blasted in this world, and all our schemes of grandeur overthrown; and since our everlasting destiny is settled by a decree which no act of ours can invalidate, let us fall by our own hands, or by the hands of each other; die like heroes; and, throwing off this frame of dross and corruption, mingle with the pure ethereal essence of existence, from which we derived our being.'

I shuddered at a view of the dreadful alternative, yet was obliged to confess that in my present circumstances existence was not to be borne. It was in vain that I reasoned on the sinfulness of the deed, and on its damning nature; he made me condemn myself out of my own mouth, by allowing the absolute nature of justifying grace, and the impossibility of the elect ever falling from the faith, or the glorious end to which they were called; and then he said, this granted, self-destruction was the act of a hero, and none but a coward would shrink from it, to suffer a hundred times more every day and night that passed over his head.

I said I was still contented to be that coward; and all that I begged of him was, to leave me to my fortune for a season, and to the just judgment of my creator; but he said his word and honour were engaged on my behoof, and these, in such a case, were not to be violated. 'If you will not pity yourself, have pity on me,' added he: 'turn your eyes on me, and behold to what I am reduced.'

Involuntarily did I turn round at the request, and caught a half glance of his features. May no eye destined to reflect the beauties of the New Jerusalem inward upon the beatific soul, behold such a sight as mine then beheld! My immortal spirit, blood, and bones, were all withered at the blasting sight; and I arose and withdrew, with groanings which the pangs of death shall never wring from me.

Not daring to look behind me, I crept on my way, and that night reached this hamlet on the Scottish border; and being grown reckless of danger, and hardened to scenes of horror, I took up my lodging with a poor hind, who is a widower, and who could only accommodate me with a bed of rushes at his fire-side. At midnight I heard some strange sounds, too much resembling those to which I had of late been inured; but they kept at a distance, and I was soon persuaded that there was a power protected that house superior to those that contended for, or had the mastery over me. Overjoyed at finding such an asylum, I remained in the humble cot. This is the third day I have lived under the roof, freed of my hellish assailants, spending my time in prayer, and writing out this my journal, which I have fashioned to stick in with my printed work, and to which I intend to add portions while I remain in this pilgrimage state, which, I find too well, cannot be long.

August 3, 1712.—This morning the hind has brought me word from Redesdale, whither he had been for

coals, that a stranger gentleman had been traversing that country, making the most earnest inquiries after me, or one of the same appearance; and from the description that he brought of this stranger, I could easily perceive who it was. Rejoicing that my tormentor has lost traces of me for once, I am making haste to leave my asylum, on pretence of following this stranger, but in reality to conceal myself still more completely from his search. Perhaps this may be the last sentence ever I am destined to write. If so, farewell Christian reader! May God grant to thee a happier destiny than has been allotted to me here on earth, and the same assurance of acceptance above! *Amen*.

Ault-Righ, August 24, 1712.—Here am I, set down on the open moor to add one sentence more to my woful journal; and then, farewell all beneath the sun!

On leaving the hind's cottage on the Border, I hasted to the north-west, because in that quarter I perceived the highest and wildest hills before me. As I crossed the mountains above Hawick, I exchanged clothes with a poor homely shepherd, whom I found lying on a hill side, singing to himself some woful love ditty. He was glad of the change, and proud of his saintly apparel; and I was no less delighted with mine, by which I now supposed myself completely disguised; and I found moreover that in this garb of a common shepherd I was made welcome in every house. I slept the first night in a farm-house nigh to the church of Roberton, without hearing or seeing aught extraordinary; yet I observed next morning that all the servants kept aloof from me, and regarded me with looks of aversion. The next night I came to this house, where the farmer engaged me as a shephered; and finding him a kind, worthy, and religious man, I accepted of his terms with great gladness. I had not, however, gone many times to the sheep, before all the rest of the shepherds told my master, that I knew nothing about herding, and begged of him to dismiss me. He perceived too well the truth of their intelligence; but being much taken with my learning, and religious conversation, he would not put me away, but set me to herd his cattle.

It was lucky for me, that before I came here, a report had prevailed, perhaps for an age, that this farm-house was haunted at certain seasons by a ghost. I say it was lucky for me, for I had not been in it many days before the same appalling noises began to prevail around me about midnight, often continuing till near the dawning. Still they kept aloof, and without doors; for this gentleman's house, like the cottage I was in formerly, seemed to be a sanctuary from all demoniacal power. He appears to be a good man and a just, and mocks at the idea of supernatural agency, and he either does not hear these persecuting spirits, or will not acknowledge it, though of late he appears much perturbed.

The consternation of the menials has been extreme. They ascribe all to the ghost, and tell frightful stories of murders having been committed there long ago. Of late, however, they are beginning to suspect that it is I that am haunted; and as I have never given them any satisfactory account of myself, they are whispering that I am a murderer, and haunted by the spirits of those I have slain.

August 30.—This day I have been informed, that I am to be banished the dwelling-house by night, and to sleep in an out-house by myself, to try if the family can get any rest when freed of my presence. I have peremptorily refused acquiescence, on which my master's brother struck me, and kicked me with his foot. My body being quite exhausted by suffering, I am grown weak and feeble both in mind and bodily frame, and actually unable to resent any insult or injury. I am the child of earthly misery and despair, if ever there was one existent. My master is still my friend; but there are so many masters here, and every one of them alike harsh to me, that I wish myself in my grave every hour of the day. If I am driven from the family sanctuary by night, I know I shall be torn in pieces before morning; and then who will deign or dare to gather up my mangled limbs, and give them honoured burial.

My last hour is arrived: I see my tormentor once more approaching me in this wild. Oh, that the earth would swallow me up, or the hill fall and cover me! Farewell for ever!

September 7, 1712.—My devoted, princely, but sanguine friend, has been with me again and again. My time is expired, and I find a relief beyond measure, for he has fully convinced me that no act of mine can mar the eternal counsel, or in the smallest degree alter or extenuate one event which was decreed before the foundations of the world were laid. He said he had watched over me with the greatest anxiety, but perceiving my rooted aversion towards him, he had forborn troubling me with his presence. But now, seeing that I was certainly to be driven from my sanctuary that night, and that there would be a number of infernals watching to make a prey of my body, he came to caution me not to despair, for that he would protect me at all risks, if the power remained with him. He then repeated an ejaculatory prayer, which I was to pronounce, if in great extremity. I objected to the words as equivocal, and susceptible of being rendered in a meaning perfectly dreadful; but he reasoned against this, and all reasoning with him is to no purpose. He said he did not ask me to repeat the words, unless greatly straitened; and that I saw his strength and power giving way, and when perhaps nothing else could save me.

The dreaded hour of night arrived; and, as he said, I was expelled from the family residence, and ordered to a byre, or cow-house, that stood parallel with the dwelling-house behind, where, on a divot

loft, my humble bedstead stood, and the cattle grunted and puffed below me. How unlike the splendid halls of Dalcastle! And to what I am now reduced, let the reflecting reader judge. Lord, thou knowest all that I have done for thy cause on earth! Why then art thou laying thy hands so sore upon me? Why hast thou set me as a butt of thy malice? But thy will must be done! Thou wilt repay me in a better world. *Amen*.

September 8.—My first night of trial in this place is overpast! Would that it were the last that I should ever see in this detested world! If the horrors of hell are equal to those I have, suffered, eternity will be of short duration there, for no created energy can support them for one single month, or week. I have been buffeted as never living creature was. My vitals have all been torn, and every faculty and feeling of my soul racked, and tormented into callous insensibility. I was even hung by the locks over a yawning chasm, to which I could perceive no bottom, and then—not till then, did I repeat the tremendous prayer! —I was instantly at liberty; and what I now am, the Almighty knows! *Amen*.

September 18, 1712.—Still am I living, though liker to a vision than a human being; but this is my last day of mortal existence. Unable to resist any longer, I pledged myself to my devoted friend, that on this day we should die together, and trust to the charity of the children of men for a grave. I am solemnly pledged; and though I dared to repent, I am aware he will not be gainsaid, for he is raging with despair at his fallen and decayed majesty, and there is some miserable comfort in the idea that my tormentor shall fall with me. Farewell, world, with all thy miseries; for comforts or enjoyments hast thou none! Farewell, woman, whom I have despised and shunned; and man, whom I have hated; whom, nevertheless, I desire to leave in charity! And thou, sun, bright emblem of a far brighter effulgence, I bid farewell to thee also! I do not now take my last look of thee, for to thy glorious orb shall a poor suicide's last earthly look be raised. But, ah! who is yon that I see approaching furiously—his stern face blackened with horrid despair! My hour is at hand.—Almighty God, what is this that I am about to do! The hour of repentance is past, and now: my fate is inevitable.—*Amen, for ever!* I will now seal up my little book, and conceal it; and cursed be he who trieth to alter or amend!

END OF THE MEMOIR

The Editor's Narrative Concluded

What can this work be? Sure, you will say, it must be an allegory; or (as the writer calls it) a religious PARABLE, showing the dreadful danger of self-righteousness? I cannot tell. Attend to the sequel: which is a thing so extraordinary, so unprecedented, and so far out of the common course of human events, that if there were not hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it, I would not bid any rational being believe it.

In the first place, take the following extract from an authentic letter, published in *Blackwood's Magazine* for August, 1823.

'On the top of a wild height called Cowanscroft, where the lands of three proprietors meet all at one point, there has been for long and many years the grave of a suicide marked out by a stone standing at the head, and another at the feet. Often have I stood musing over it myself, when a shepherd on one of the farms, of which it formed the extreme boundary, and thinking what could induce a young man, who had scarcely reached the prime of life, to brave his Maker, and rush into his presence by an act of his own erring hand, and one so unnatural and preposterous. But it never once occurred to me, as an object of curiosity, to dig up the mouldering bones of the culprit, which I considered as the most revolting of all objects. The thing was, however, done last month, and a discovery made of one of the greatest natural phenomena that I have heard of in this country.

'The little traditionary history that remains of this unfortunate youth, is altogether a singular one. He was not a native of the place, nor would he ever tell from what place he came; but he was remarkable for a deep, thoughtful, and sullen disposition. There was nothing against his character that any body knew of here, and he had been a considerable time in the place. The last service he was in was with a Mr Anderson of Eltrive, (Ault-Righ, *the King's burn*,) who died about 100 years ago, and who had hired him during the summer to herd a stock of young cattle in Eltrive Hope. It happened one day in the month of September, that James Anderson, his master's son, went with this young man to the Hope to divert himself. The herd had his dinner along with him, and about one o'clock, when the boy proposed going home, the former pressed him very hard to stay and take share of his dinner; but the boy refused, for fear his parents might be alarmed about him, and said he *would* go home: on which the herd said to him, "Then, if ye winna stay with me, James, ye may depend on't I'll cut my throat afore ye come back again."

'I have heard it likewise reported, but only by one person, that there had been some things stolen out of his master's house a good while before, and that the boy had discovered a silver knife and fork, that was a part of the stolen property, in the herd's possession that day, and that it was this discovery that drove him to despair.

'The boy did not return to the Hope that afternoon; and, before evening, a man coming in at the pass called *The Hart Loup*, with a drove of lambs, on the way for Edinburgh, perceived something like a man standing in a strange frightful position at the side of one Eldinhope hay-ricks. The driver's attention was riveted on this strange uncouth figure, and as the drove-road passed at no great distance from the spot, he first called, but receiving no answer, he went up to the spot, and behold it was the above-mentioned young man, who had hung himself in the hay rope that was tying down the rick.

'This was accounted a great wonder; and every one said, if the devil had not assisted him it was impossible the thing could have been done; for, in general, these ropes are so brittle, being made of green hay, that they will scarcely bear to be bound over the rick. And the more to horrify the good people of this neighbourhood, the driver said, when he first came in view, *he could almost give his oath* that he saw two people busily engaged at the hay-rick, going round it and round it, and he thought they were dressing it.

'If this asseveration approximated at all to truth, it makes this evident at least, that the unfortunate young man had hanged himself after the man with the lambs came in view. He was, however, quite dead when he cut him down. He had fastened two of the old hay-ropes at the bottom of the rick on one side, (indeed they are all fastened so when first laid on,) so that he had nothing to do but to loosen two of the ends on the other side. These he had tied in a knot round his neck, and then slackening his knees, and letting himself down gradually, till the hay-rope bore all his weight, he had contrived to put an end to his

existence in that way. Now the fact is, that if you try all the ropes that are thrown over all the outfield hay-ricks in Scotland, there is not one among a thousand of them will hang a colley dog; so that the manner of this wretch's death was rather a singular circumstance.

'Early next morning, Mr Anderson's servants went reluctantly away, and, taking an old blanket with them for a winding sheet, they rolled up the body of the deceased, first in his own plaid, letting the hay-rope still remain about his neck, and then rolling the old blanket over all, they bore the loathed remains away to the distance of three miles or so, on spokes, to the top of Cowan's-Croft, at the very point where the Duke of Buccleuch's land, the Laird of Drummelzier's, and Lord Napier's, meet, and there they buried him, with all that he had on and about him, silver knife and fork and altogether. Thus far went tradition, and no one ever disputed one jot of the disgusting oral tale.

'A nephew of that Mr Anderson's who was with the hapless youth that day he died, says, that, as far as he can gather from the relations of friends that he remembers, and of that same uncle in particular, it is one hundred and five years next month, (that is September, 1823), since that event happened; and I think it likely that this gentleman's information is correct. But sundry other people, much older than he, whom I have consulted, pretend that it is six or seven years more. They say they have heard that Mr James Anderson was then a boy ten years of age; that he lived to an old age, upwards of fourscore, and it is two and forty years since he died. Whichever way it may be, it was about that period some way, of that there is no doubt.

'It so happened, that two young men, William Shiel and W. Sword, were out, on an adjoining height, this summer, casting peats, and it came into their heads to open this grave in the wilderness, and see if there were any of the bones of the suicide of former ages and centuries remaining. They did so, but opened only one half of the grave, beginning at the head and about the middle at the same time. It was not long till they came upon the old blanket—I think they said not much more than a foot from the surface. They tore that open, and there was the hay rope lying stretched down alongst his breast, so fresh that they saw at first sight that it was made of *risp*, a sort of long sword-grass that grows about marshes and the sides of lakes. One of the young men seized the rope and pulled by it, but the old enchantment of the devil, remained,—it would not break; and so he pulled and pulled at it, till behold the body came up into a sitting posture, with a broad blue bonnet on its head, and its plaid around it, all as fresh as that day it was laid in! I never heard of a preservation so wonderful, if it be true as was related to me, for still I have not had the curiosity to go and view the body myself. The features were all so plain, that an acquaintance might easily have known him. One of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples remained and did not spring out again. He had fine yellow hair, about nine inches long; but not a hair of it could they pull out till they cut part of it off with a knife. They also cut off some portions of his clothes, which were all quite fresh, and distributed them among their acquaintances, sending a portion to me, among the rest, to keep as natural curiosities. Several gentlemen have in a manner forced me to give them fragments of these enchanted garments: I have, however, retained a small portion for you, which I send along with this, being a piece of his plaid, and another of his waistcoat breast, which you will see are still as fresh as that day they were laid in the grave.

'His broad blue bonnet was sent to Edinburgh several weeks ago, to the great regret of some gentlemen connected with the land, who wished to have it for a keep sake. For my part, fond as I am of blue bonnets, and broad ones in particular, I declare I durst not have worn that one. There was nothing of the silver knife and fork discovered, that I heard of, nor was it very likely it should: but it would appear he had been very near run of cash, which I daresay had been the cause of his utter despair; for, on searching his pockets, nothing was found but three old Scots halfpennies. These young men meeting with another shepherd afterwards, his curiosity was so much excited that they went and digged up the curious remains a second time, which was a pity, as it is likely that by these exposures to the air, and from the impossibility of burying it up again as closely as it was before, the flesh will now fall to dust.'

The letter from which the above is an extract, is signed JAMES HOGG, and dated from Altrive Lake, *August* 1*st*, 1823. It bears the stamp of authenticity in every line; yet, so often had I been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine, that when this relation met my eye, I did not believe it; but from the moment that I perused it, I half formed the resolution of investigating these wonderful remains personally, if any such existed; for, in the immediate vicinity of the scene, as I supposed, I knew of more attractive metal than the dilapidated remains of mouldering suicides.

Accordingly, having some business in Edinburgh in September last, and being obliged to wait a few

days for the arrival of a friend from London, I took that opportunity to pay a visit to my townsman and fellow collegian, Mr L——t of C——d, advocate. I mentioned to him Hogg's letter, asking him if the statement was founded at all on truth. His answer was, 'I suppose so. For my part I never doubted the thing, having been told that there has been a deal of talking about it up in the Forest for some time past. But, God knows! Hogg has imposed as ingenious lies on the public ere now.'

I said, if it was within reach, I should like exceedingly to visit both the Shepherd and the Scots mummy he had described. Mr L——t assented at the first proposal saying he had no objections to take a ride that length with me, and make the fellow produce his credentials: That we would have a delightful jaunt through a romantic and now classical country, and some good sport into the bargain, provided he could procure a horse for me, from his father-in-law, next day. He sent up to a Mr L——w to inquire, who returned for answer, that there was an excellent pony at my service, and that he himself would accompany us, being obliged to attend a great sheep fair at Thirlestane; and that he was certain the Shepherd would be there likewise.

Mr L——t said that was the very man we wanted to make our party complete; and at an early hour next morning we started for the ewe fair of Thirlestane, taking *Blackwood's Magazine* for August along with us. We rode through the ancient royal burgh of Selkirk,—halted and corned our horses at a romantic village, nigh to some deep linns on the Ettrick, and reached the market ground at Thirlestane-green a little before midday. We soon found Hogg, standing near the *foot* of the market, as he called it, beside a great drove of *paulies*, a species of stock that I never heard of before. They were small sheep, striped on the backs with red chalk. Mr L——t introduced me to him as a great wool-stapler, come to raise the price of that article; but he eyed me with distrust, and turning his back on us, answered, 'I hae sell'd mine.'

I followed, and shewing him the above-quoted letter, said I was exceedingly curious to have a look of these singular remains he had so ingeniously described; but he only answered me with the remark, that 'It was a queer fancy for a woo-stapler to tak.'

His two friends then requested him to accompany us to the spot, and to take some of his shepherds with us to assist in raising the body; but he spurned at the idea, saying, 'Od bless ye, lad! I hae ither matters to mind. I hae a' thae paulies to sell, an' a' yon Highland stotts down on the green every ane; an' then I hae ten scores o' yowes to buy after, an' if I canna first sell my ain stock, I canna buy nae ither body's. I hae mair ado than I can manage the day, foreby ganging to houk up hunder-year-auld banes.'

Finding that we could make nothing of him, we left him with his *paulies*, Highland stotts, grey jacket, and broad blue bonnet, to go in search of some other guide. L——w soon found one, for he seemed acquainted with every person in the fair. We got a fine old shepherd, named W——m B——e, a great original, and a very obliging and civil man, who asked no conditions but that we should not speak of it, because he did not wish it to come to his master's ears, that he had been engaged in *sic a profane thing*. We promised strict secrecy; and accompanied by another farmer, Mr S——t, and old B——e, we proceeded to the grave, which B——e described as about a mile and a half distant from the market ground.

We went into a shepherd's cot to get a drink of milk, when I read to our guide Mr Hogg's description, asking him if he thought it correct? He said there was hardly a bit o't correct, for the grave was not on the hill of Cowan's-Croft, nor yet on the point where three lairds' lands met, but on the top of a hill called the Faw-Law, where there was no land that was not the Duke of Buccleuch's within a quarter of a mile. He added that it was a wonder how the poet could be mistaken there, who once herded the very ground where the grave is, and saw both hills from his own window. Mr L——w testified great surprise at such a singular blunder, as also how the body came *not* to be buried at the meeting of three or four lairds' lands, which had always been customary in the south of Scotland. Our guide said he had always heard it reported, that the Eltrive men, with Mr David Anderson at their head, had risen before day on the Monday morning, it having been on the Sabbath day that the man *put down* himself; and that they set out with the intention of burying him on Cowan's-Croft, where three marches met at a point. But it having been an invariable rule to bury such *lost sinners* before the rising of the sun, these five men were overtaken by day-light, as they passed the house of Berry-Knowe; and by the time they reached the top of the Faw-Law, the sun was beginning to skair the east. On this they laid down the body, and digged a deep grave with all expedition; but when they had done, it was too short, and the body being stiff, it would not go down, on which Mr David Anderson looking to the east, and perceiving that the sun would be up on them in a few minutes, set his foot on the suicide's brow, and tramped down his head into the grave with his iron-heeled shoe, until his nose and skull crashed again, and at the same time uttered a terrible curse on the wretch who had disgraced the family, and given them all this trouble. This anecdote, our guide said, he had heard when a boy, from the mouth of Robert Laidlaw, one of the five men who buried the body.

We soon reached the spot, and I confess I felt a singular sensation, when I saw the grey stone standing at the head, and another at the feet, and the one half of the grave manifestly new digged, and closed up again as had been described. I could still scarcely deem the thing to be a reality, for the ground did not appear to be wet, but a kind of dry rotten moss. On looking around, we found some fragments of clothes, some teeth, and part of a pocket-book, which had not been returned into the grave, when the body had been last raised, for it had been twice raised before this, but only from the loins upward.

To work we fell with two spades, and soon cleared away the whole of the covering. The part of the grave that had been opened before, was filled with mossy mortar, which impeded us exceedingly, and entirely prevented a proper investigation of the fore parts of the body. I will describe every thing as I saw it before four respectable witnesses, whose names I shall publish at large if permitted. A number of the bones came up separately; for with the constant flow of liquid stuff into the deep grave, we could not see to preserve them in their places. At length great loads of coarse clothes, blanketing, plaiding, &c. appeared; we tried to lift these regularly up, and on doing so, part of a skeleton came up, but no flesh, save a little that was hanging in dark flitters about the spine, but which had no consistence; it was merely the appearance of flesh without the substance. The head was wanting; and I being very anxious to possess the skull, the search was renewed among the mortar and rags. We first found a part of the scalp, with the long hair firm on it; which, on being cleaned, is neither black nor fair, but of a darkish dusk, the most common of any other colour. Soon afterwards we found the skull, but it was not complete. A spade had damaged it, and one of the temple quarters was wanting. I am no phrenologist, not knowing one organ from another, but I thought the skull of that wretched man no study. If it was particular for any thing, it was for a smooth, almost perfect rotundity, with only a little protuberance above the vent of the ear.

When we came to the part of the grave that had never been opened before, the appearance of every thing was quite different. There the remains lay under a close vault of moss, and within a vacant space; and I suppose, by the digging in the former part of the grave, that part had been deepened, and drawn the moisture away from this part, for here all was perfect. The breeches still suited the thigh, the stocking the leg, and the garters were wrapt as neatly and as firm below the knee as if they had been newly tied. The shoes were all opened in the seams, the hemp having decayed, but the soles, upper leathers, and wooden heels, which were made of birch, were all as fresh as any of those we wore. There was one thing I could not help remarking, that in the inside of one of the shoes there was a layer of cow's dung, about one eighth of an inch thick, and in the hollow of the sole fully one fourth of an inch. It was firm, green, and fresh; and proved that he had been working in a byre. His clothes were all of a singular ancient cut, and no less singular in their texture. Their durability certainly would have been prodigious; for in thickness, coarseness, and strength, I never saw any cloth in the smallest degree to equal them. His coat was a frock coat, of a yellowish drab colour, with wide sleeves. It is tweeled, milled, and thicker than a carpet. I cut off two of the skirts and brought them with me. His vest was of striped serge, such as I have often seen worn by country people. It was lined and backed with white stuff. The breeches were a sort of striped plaiding, which I never saw worn, but which our guide assured us was very common in the country once, though, from the old clothes which he had seen remaining of it, he judged that it could not be less than two hundred years since it was in fashion. His garters were of worsted, and striped with black or blue; his stockings gray, and wanting the feet. I brought samples of all along with me. I have likewise now got possession of the bonnet, which puzzles me most of all. It is not conformable with the rest of the dress. It is neither a broad bonnet, nor a Border bonnet; for there is an open behind, for trying, which no genuine Border bonnet, I am told, ever had. It seems to have been a Highland bonnet, worn in a flat way like a scone on the crown, such as is sometimes still seen in the west of Scotland. All the limbs, from the loins to the toes, seemed perfect and entire, but they could not bear handling. Before we got them returned again into the grave, they were all shaken to pieces, except the thighs, which continued to retain a kind of flabby form.

All his clothes that were sewed with linen yarn were lying in separate portions, the thread having rotten; but such as were sewed with worsted remained perfectly firm and sound. Among such a confusion, we had hard work to find out all his pockets, and our guide supposed, that, after all, we did not find above the half of them. In his vest pocket was a long clasp knife, very sharp; the haft was thin, and the scales shone as if there had been silver inside. Mr Sc——t took it with him, and presented it to his neighbour, Mr R——n of W——n L——e, who still has it in his possession. We found a comb, a gimblet, a vial, a small neat square board, a pair of plated knee-buckles, and several samples of cloth of different kinds, rolled neatly up within one another. At length, while we were busy on the search, Mr L——t picked up a leathern case, which seemed to have been wrapped round and round by some ribbon, or cord, that had been rotten from it, for the swaddling marks still remained. Both L——w and B——e called out that 'it was the tabacco spleuchan, and a well-filled ane too;' but on opening it out, we found,

to our great astonishment, that it contained a *printed pamphlet*. We were all curious to see what sort of a pamphlet such a person would read; what it could contain that he seemed to have had such a care about? for the slough in which it was rolled, was fine chamois leather; what colour it had been, could not be known. But the pamphlet was wrapped so close together, and so damp, rotten, and yellow, that it seemed one solid piece. We all concluded, from some words that we could make out, that it was a religious tract, but that it would be impossible to make any thing of it. Mr L——w remarked that it was a great pity if a few sentences could not be made out, for that it was a question what might be contained in that little book; and then he requested Mr L——t to give it to me, as he had so many things of literature and law to attend to, that he would never think more of it. He replied, that either of us were heartily welcome to it, for that he had thought of returning it into the grave, if he could have made out but a line or two, to have seen what was its tendency.

'Grave, man!' exclaimed L——w, who speaks excellent strong broad Scots: 'My truly, but ye grave weel! I wad esteem the contents o' that spleuchan as the most precious treasure. I'll tell you what it is, sir: I hae often wondered how it was that this man's corpse has been miraculously preserved frae decay, a hunder times langer than ony other body's, or than even a tanner's. But now I could wager a guinea, it has been for the preservation o' that little book. And Lord kens what may be in't! It will maybe reveal some mystery that mankind disna ken naething about yet.'

'If there be any mysteries in it,' returned the other, 'it is not for your handling, my dear friend, who are too much taken up about mysteries already.' And with these words he presented the mysterious pamphlet to me. With very little trouble, save that of a thorough drying, I unrolled it all with ease, and found the very tract which I have here ventured to lay before the public, part of it in small bad print, and the remainder in manuscript. The title page is written, and is as follows:

THE PRIVATE
MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS
OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER:

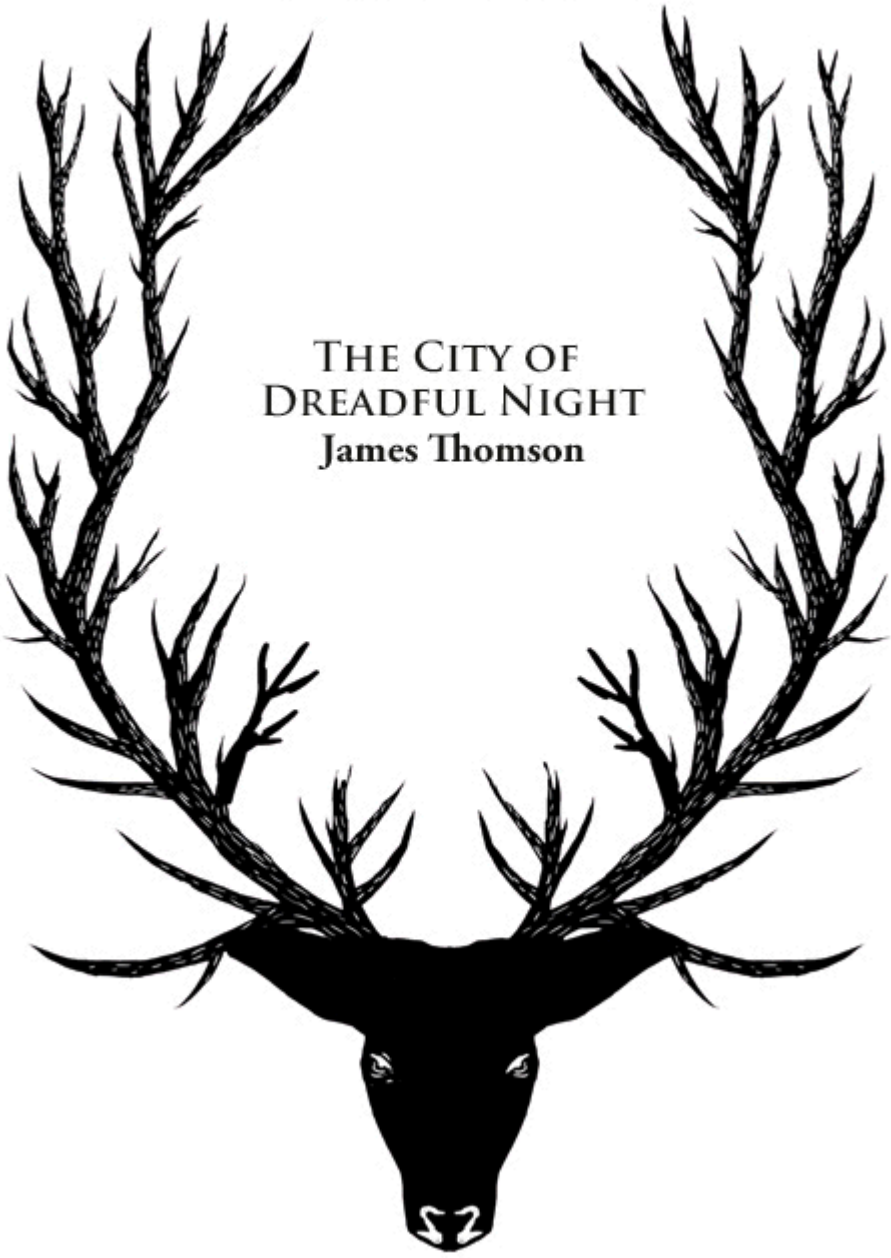
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.
FIDELI CERTA MERCES.

And, alongst the head, it is the same as given in the present edition of the work. I altered the title to *A Self-justified Sinner*, but my booksellers did not approve of it; and there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend, I have let it stand as it is. Should it be thought to attach discredit to any received principle of our church, I am blameless. The printed part ends at page 222, and the rest is in a fine old hand, extremely small and close. I have ordered the printer to procure a fac-simile of it, to be bound in with the volume.

With regard to the work itself, I dare not venture a judgment, for I do not understand it. I believe no person, man or woman, will ever peruse it with the same attention that I have done, and yet I confess that I do not comprehend the writer's drift. It is certainly impossible that these scenes could ever have occurred, that he describes as having himself transacted. I think it *may be* possible that he had some hand in the death of his brother, and yet I am disposed greatly to doubt it; and the numerous distorted traditions, &c. which remain of that event, may be attributable to the work having been printed and burnt, and of course the story known to all the printers, with their families and gossips. That the young Laird of Dalcastle came by a violent death, there remains no doubt; but that this wretch slew him, there is to me a good deal. However, allowing this to have been the case, I account all the rest either dreaming or madness; or, as he says to Mr Watson, a religious parable, on purpose to illustrate something scarcely tangible, but to which he seems to have attached great weight. Were the relation at all consistent with reason, it corresponds so minutely with traditionary facts, that it could scarcely have missed to have been received as authentic; but in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down, that a man should be daily tempted by the devil, in the semblance of a fellow-creature; and at length lured to self-destruction, in the hopes that this same fiend and tormentor was to suffer and fall along with him. It was a bold theme for an allegory, and would have suited that age well had it been taken up by one fully qualified for the task, which this writer was not. In short, we must either conceive him not only the greatest fool, but the greatest wretch, on whom was ever stamped the form of humanity; or, that he was a religious maniac, who wrote and wrote about a deluded creature, till he arrived at that height of madness, that he believed himself the very object whom he had been all along describing. And in order to escape from an ideal tormentor, committed that act for which, according to the tenets he embraced, there was no remission, and which consigned his memory and his name to everlasting detestation.

FINIS

SCOTTISH
GOTHIC



THE CITY OF
DREADFUL NIGHT
James Thomson

‘Yet why evoke the spectres of black night
To blot the sunshine of exultant years?’

About the Author

James Thomson (1834–1882) was born in Port Glasgow but sent to an orphanage for Scottish children (The Royal Caledonian Asylum) in London after his father suffered a stroke. Upon leaving the orphanage he joined the army and served with them for over ten years, leaving in 1862 after he was dishonourably discharged, possibly due to his drinking. Thomson moved to London and worked for Charles Bradlaugh, founder of the *National Reformer*, who he had met while serving in Ireland. Thomson spent the remainder of his life writing essays and poems which he submitted to various publications, the most well-known of these being *The City of Dreadful Night*. He died at the age of 47 in London of a burst blood vessel.

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Footnotes

Per me si va nella città dolente.
DANTE

Poi di tanto adoprar, di tanti moti
D'ogni celeste, ogni terrena cosa,
Girando senza posa,
Per tornar sempre là donde son mosse;
Uso alcuno, alcun frutto
Indovinar non so.

Sola nel mondo eterna, a cui si volve
Ogni creata cosa,
In te, morte, si posa
Nostra ignuda natura;
Lieta no, ma sicura
Dell' antico dolor …
Però ch' esser beato
Nega ai mortali e nega a' morti il fato.

LEOPARDI

Proem

Lo, thus, as prostrate, ‘In the dust I write
   My heart’s deep languor and my soul’s sad tears.’
Yet why evoke the spectres of black night
   To blot the sunshine of exultant years?
Why disinter dead faith from mouldering hidden?
Why break the seals of mute despair unbidden,
   And wail life’s discords into careless ears?

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
   To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth
Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles,
   False dreams, false hopes, false masks and modes of youth;
Because it gives some sense of power and passion
In helpless impotence to try to fashion
   Our woe in living words howe’er uncouth.

Surely I write not for the hopeful young,
   Or those who deem their happiness of worth,
Or such as pasture and grow fat among
   The shows of life and feel nor doubt nor dearth,
Or pious spirits with a God above them
To sanctify and glorify and love them,
   Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth.

For none of these I write, and none of these
   Could read the writing if they deigned to try:
So may they flourish, in their due degrees,
   On our sweet earth and in their unplaced sky.
If any cares for the weak words here written,
It must be some one desolate, Fate-smitten,
   Whose faith and hope are dead, and who would die.

Yes, here and there some weary wanderer
   In that same city of tremendous night,
Will understand the speech, and feel a stir
   Of fellowship in all-disastrous fight;
‘I suffer mute and lonely, yet another
Uplifts his voice to let me know a brother
   Travels the same wild paths though out of sight.’

O sad Fraternity, do I unfold
   Your dolorous mysteries shrouded from of yore?
Nay, be assured; no secret can be told
   To any who divined it not before:
None uninitiate by many a presage
Will comprehend the language of the message,
   Although proclaimed aloud for evermore.

1

The City is of Night; perchance of Death,
   But certainly of Night; for never there
Can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath
   After the dewy dawning's cold grey air:
The moon and stars may shine with scorn or pity;
The sun has never visited that city,
   For it dissolveth in the daylight fair.

Dissolveth like a dream of night away;
   Though present in distempered gloom of thought
And deadly weariness of heart all day.
   But when a dream night after night is brought
Throughout a week, and such weeks few or many
Recur each year for several years, can any
   Discern that dream from real life in aught?

For life is but a dream whose shapes return,
   Some frequently, some seldom, some by night
And some by day, some night and day: we learn,
   The while all change and many vanish quite,
In their recurrence with recurrent changes
A certain seeming order; where this ranges
   We count things real; such is memory's might.

A river girds the city west and south,
   The main north channel of a broad lagoon,
Regurging with the salt tides from the mouth;
   Waste marshes shine and glister to the moon
For leagues, then moorland black, then stony ridges;
Great piers and causeways, many noble bridges,
   Connect the town and islet suburbs strewn.

Upon an easy slope it lies at large,
   And scarcely overlaps the long curved crest
Which swells out two leagues from the river marge.
   A trackless wilderness rolls north and west,
Savannahs, savage woods, enormous mountains,
Bleak uplands, black ravines with torrent fountains;
   And eastward rolls the shipless sea's unrest.

The city is not ruinous, although
   Great ruins of an unremembered past,
With others of a few short years ago
   More sad, are found within its precincts vast.
The street-lamps always burn; but scarce a casement
In house or palace front from roof to basement
   Doth glow or gleam athwart the mirk air cast.

The street-lamps burn amidst the baleful glooms,
   Amidst the soundless solitudes immense
Of rangèd mansions dark and still as tombs.
   The silence which benumbs or strains the sense

Fulfils with awe the soul's despair unweeping:
Myriads of habitants are ever sleeping,
   Or dead, or fled from nameless pestilence!

Yet as in some necropolis you find
   Perchance one mourner to a thousand dead,
So there; worn faces that look deaf and blind
   Like tragic masks of stone. With weary tread,
Each wrapt in his own doom, they wander, wander,
Or sit foredone and desolately ponder
   Through sleepless hours with heavy drooping head.

Mature men chiefly, few in age or youth,
   A woman rarely, now and then a child:
A child! If here the heart turns sick with ruth
   To see a little one from birth defiled,
Or lame or blind, as preordained to languish
Through youthless life, think how it bleeds with anguish
   To meet one erring in that homeless wild.

They often murmur to themselves, they speak
   To one another seldom, for their woe
Broods maddening inwardly and scorns to wreak
   Itself abroad; and if at whiles it grow
To frenzy which must rave, none heeds the clamour,
Unless there waits some victim of like glamour,
   To rave in turn, who lends attentive show.

The City is of Night, but not of Sleep;
   There sweet sleep is not for the weary brain;
The pitiless hours like years and ages creep,
   A night seems termless hell. This dreadful strain
Of thought and consciousness which never ceases,
Or which some moments' stupor but increases,
   This, worse than woe, makes wretches there insane.

They leave all hope behind who enter there:
   One certitude while sane they cannot leave,
One anodyne for torture and despair;
   The certitude of Death, which no reprieve
Can put off long; and which, divinely tender,
But waits the outstretched hand to promptly render
   That draught whose slumber nothing can bereave.[fn1]

2

Because he seemed to walk with an intent
   I followed him; who, shadowlike and frail,
Unswervingly though slowly onward went,
   Regardless, wrapt in thought as in a veil:
Thus step for step with lonely sounding feet
We travelled many a long dim silent street.

At length he paused: a black mass in the gloom,
   A tower that merged into the heavy sky;
Around, the huddled stones of grave and tomb:
   Some old God's-acre now corruption's sty:
He murmured to himself with dull despair,
Here Faith died, poisoned by this charnel air.

Then turning to the right went on once more,
   And travelled weary roads without suspense;
And reached at last a low wall's open door,
   Whose villa gleamed beyond the foliage dense:
He gazed, and muttered with a hard despair,
Here Love died, stabbed by its own worshipped pair.

Then turning to the right resumed his march,
   And travelled street and lanes with wondrous strength,
Until on stooping through a narrow arch
   We stood before a squalid house at length:
He gazed, and whispered with a cold despair,
Here Hope died, starved out in its utmost lair.

When he had spoken thus, before he stirred,
   I spoke, perplexed by something in the signs
Of desolation I had seen and heard
   In this drear pilgrimage to ruined shrines:
When Faith and Love and Hope are dead indeed,
Can Life still live? By what doth it proceed?

As whom his one intense thought overpowers,
   He answered coldly, Take a watch, erase
The signs and figures of the circling hours,
   Detach the hands, remove the dial-face;
The works proceed until run down; although
Bereft of purpose, void of use, still go.

Then turning to the right paced on again,
   And traversed squares and travelled streets whose glooms
Seemed more and more familiar to my ken;
   And reached that sullen temple of the tombs;
And paused to murmur with the old despair,
Here Faith died, poisoned by this charnel air.

I ceased to follow, for the knot of doubt
   Was severed sharply with a cruel knife:
He circled thus for ever tracing out

The series of the fraction left of Life;
Perpetual recurrence in the scope
Of but three terms, dead Faith, dead Love, dead Hope.[fn2]

3

Although lamps burn along the silent streets,
   Even when moonlight silvers empty squares
The dark holds countless lanes and close retreats;
   But when the night its sphereless mantle wears
The open spaces yawn with gloom abysmal,
The sombre mansions loom immense and dismal,
   The lanes are black as subterranean lairs.

And soon the eye a strange new vision learns:
   The night remains for it as dark and dense,
Yet clearly in this darkness it discerns
   As in the daylight with its natural sense;
Perceives a shade in shadow not obscurely,
Pursues a stir of black in blackness surely,
   Sees spectres also in the gloom intense.

The ear, too, with the silence vast and deep
   Becomes familiar though unreconciled;
Hears breathings as of hidden life asleep,
   And muffled throbs as of pent passions wild,
Far murmurs, speech of pity or derision;
But all more dubious than the things of vision,
   So that it knows not when it is beguiled.

No time abates the first despair and awe,
   But wonder ceases soon; the weirdest thing
Is felt least strange beneath the lawless law
   Where Death-in-Life is the eternal king;
Crushed impotent beneath this reign of terror,
Dazed with such mysteries of woe and error,
   The soul is too outworn for wondering.

4

He stood alone within the spacious square
   Declaiming from the central grassy mound,
With head uncovered and with streaming hair,
   As if large multitudes were gathered round:
A stalwart shape, the gestures full of might,
The glances burning with unnatural light: –

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: All was black,
In heaven no single star, on earth no track;
A brooding hush without a stir or note,
The air so thick it clotted in my throat;
And thus for hours; then some enormous things
Swooped past with savage cries and clanking wings:
   But I strode on austere;
   No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Eyes of fire
Glared at me throbbing with a starved desire;
The hoarse and heavy and carnivorous breath
Was hot upon me from deep jaws of death;
Sharp claws, swift talons, fleshless fingers cold
Plucked at me from the bushes, tried to hold:
   But I strode on austere;
   No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Lo you, there,
That hillock burning with a brazen glare;
Those myriad dusky flames with points a-glow
Which writhed and hissed and darted to and fro;
A Sabbath of the Serpents, heaped pell-mell
For Devil's roll-call and some *fête* of Hell:
   Yet I strode on austere;
   No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Meteors ran
And crossed their javelins on the black sky-span;
The zenith opened to a gulf of flame,
The dreadful thunderbolts jarred earth's fixed frame;
The ground all heaved in waves of fire that surged
And weltered round me sole there unsubmerged:
   Yet I strode on austere;
   No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Air once more,
And I was close upon a wild sea-shore;
Enormous cliffs arose on either hand,

The deep tide thundered up a league-broad strand;
White foambelts seethed there, wan spray swept and flew;
The sky broke, moon and stars and clouds and blue:
  Yet I strode on austere;
  No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: On the left
The sun arose and crowned a broad crag-cleft;
There stopped and burned out black, except a rim,
A bleeding eyeless socket, red and dim;
Whereon the moon fell suddenly south-west,
And stood above the right-hand cliffs at rest:
  Yet I strode on austere;
  No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: From the right
A shape came slowly with a ruddy light;
A woman with a red lamp in her hand,
Bareheaded and barefooted on that strand;
O desolation moving with such grace!
O anguish with such beauty in thy face!
  I fell as on my bier,
  Hope travailed with such fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: I was twain,
Two selves distinct that cannot join again;
One stood apart and knew but could not stir,
And watched the other stark in swoon and her;
And she came on, and never turned aside,
Between such sun and moon and roaring tide:
  And as she came more near
  My soul grew mad with fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Hell is mild
And piteous matched with that accursèd wild;
A large black sign was on her breast that bowed,
A broad black band ran down her snow-white shroud;
That lamp she held was her own burning heart,
Whose blood-drops trickled step by step apart:
  The mystery was clear;
  Mad rage had swallowed fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: By the sea
She knelt and bent above that senseless me;
Those lamp-drops fell upon my white brow there,
She tried to cleanse them with her tears and hair;
She murmured words of pity, love, and woe,
She heeded not the level rushing flow:
  And mad with rage and fear,
  I stood stonebound so near.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: When the tide
Swept up to her there kneeling by my side,

She clasped that corpse-like me, and they were borne
Away, and this vile me was left forlorn;
I know the whole sea cannot quench that heart,
Or cleanse that brow, or wash those two apart:
    They love; their doom is drear,
    Yet they nor hope nor fear;
    But I, what do I here?

How he arrives there none can clearly know;
   Athwart the mountains and immense wild tracts,
Or flung a waif upon that vast sea-flow,
   Or down the river's boiling cataracts:
To reach it is as dying fever-stricken;
To leave it, slow faint birth intense pangs quicken;
   And memory swoons in both the tragic acts.

But being there one feels a citizen;
   Escape seems hopeless to the heart forlorn:
Can Death-in-Life be brought to life again?
   And yet release does come; there comes a morn
When he awakes from slumbering so sweetly
That all the world is changed for him completely,
   And he is verily as if new-born.

He scarcely can believe the blissful change,
   He weeps perchance who wept not while accurst;
Never again will he approach the range
   Infected by that evil spell now burst:
Poor wretch! who once hath paced that dolent city
Shall pace it often, doomed beyond all pity,
   With horror ever deepening from the first.

Though he possess sweet babes and loving wife,
   A home of peace by loyal friendships cheered,
And love them more than death or happy life,
   They shall avail not; he must dree his weird;
Renounce all blessings for that imprecation,
Steal forth and haunt that builded desolation,
   Of woe and terrors and thick darkness reared.

6

I sat forlornly by the river-side,
   And watched the bridge-lamps glow like golden stars
Above the blackness of the swelling tide,
   Down which they struck rough gold in ruddier bars;
And heard the heave and plashing of the flow
Against the wall a dozen feet below.

Large elm-trees stood along that river-walk;
   And under one, a few steps from my seat,
I heard strange voices join in stranger talk,
   Although I had not heard approaching feet:
These bodiless voices in my waking dream
Flowed dark words blending with the sombre stream: –

And you have after all come back; come back.
I was about to follow on your track.
And you have failed: our spark of hope is black.

That I have failed is proved by my return:
The spark is quenched, nor ever more will burn,
But listen; and the story you shall learn.

I reached the portal common spirits fear,
And read the words above it, dark yet clear,
‘Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here:’

And would have passed in, gratified to gain
That positive eternity of pain,
Instead of this insufferable inane.

A demon warder clutched me, Not so fast;
First leave your hopes behind! – But years have passed
Since I left all behind me, to the last:

You cannot count for hope, with all your wit,
This bleak despair that drives me to the Pit:
How could I seek to enter void of it?

He snarled, What thing is this which apes a soul,
And would find entrance to our gulf of dole
Without the payment of the settled toll?

Outside the gate he showed an open chest:
Here pay their entrance fees the souls unblest;
Cast in some hope, you enter with the rest.

This is Pandora’s box; whose lid shall shut,
And Hell-gate too, when hopes have filled it; but
They are so thin that it will never glut.

I stood a few steps backwards, desolate;
And watched the spirits pass me to their fate,

And fling off hope, and enter at the gate.

When one casts off a load he springs upright,
Squares back his shoulders, breathes with all his might,
And briskly paces forward strong and light:

But these, as if they took some burden, bowed;
The whole frame sank; however strong and proud
Before, they crept in quite infirm and cowed.

And as they passed me, earnestly from each
A morsel of his hope I did beseech,
To pay my entrance; but all mocked my speech.

Not one would cede a tittle of his store,
Though knowing that in instants three or four
He must resign the whole for evermore.

So I returned. Our destiny is fell;
For in this Limbo we must ever dwell,
Shut out alike from Heaven and Earth and Hell.

The other sighed back, Yea; but if we grope
With care through all this Limbo's dreary scope,
We yet may pick up some minute lost hope;

And, sharing it between us, entrance win,
In spite of fiends so jealous for gross sin:
Let us without delay our search begin.

7

Some say that phantoms haunt those shadowy streets,
  And mingle freely there with sparse mankind;
And tell of ancient woes and black defeats,
  And murmur mysteries in the grave enshrined:
But others think them visions of illusion,
Or even men gone far in self-confusion;
  No man there being wholly sane in mind.

And yet a man who raves, however mad,
  Who bares his heart and tells of his own fall,
Reserves some inmost secret good or bad:
  The phantoms have no reticence at all:
The nudity of flesh will blush though tameless,
The extreme nudity of bone grins shameless,
  The unsexed skeleton mocks shroud and pall.

I have seen phantoms there that were as men
  And men that were as phantoms flit and roam;
Marked shapes that were not living to my ken,
  Caught breathings acrid as with Dead Sea foam:
The City rests for man so weird and awful,
That his intrusion there might seem unlawful,
  And phantoms there may have their proper home.

8

While I still lingered on that river-walk,
   And watched the tide as black as our black doom,
I heard another couple join in talk,
   And saw them to the left hand in the gloom
Seated against an elm bole on the ground,
Their eyes intent upon the stream profound.

‘I never knew another man on earth
   But had some joy and solace in his life,
   Some chance of triumph in the dreadful strife:
My doom has been unmitigated dearth.’

‘We gaze upon the river, and we note
The various vessels large and small that float,
Ignoring every wrecked and sunken boat.’

‘And yet I asked no splendid dower, no spoil
   Of sway or fame or rank or even wealth;
   But homely love with common food and health,
And nightly sleep to balance daily toil.’

‘This all-too humble soul would arrogate
Unto itself some signalising hate
From the supreme indifference of Fate!’

‘Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
   I think myself; yet I would rather be
   My miserable self than He, than He
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.

‘The vilest thing must be less vile than Thou
   From whom it had its being, God and Lord!
   Creator of all woe and sin! abhorred,
Malignant and implacable! I vow

‘That not for all Thy power furled and unfurled,
   For all the temples to Thy glory built,
   Would I assume the ignominious guilt
Of having made such men in such a world.’

‘As if a Being, God or Fiend, could reign,
At once so wicked, foolish, and insane,
As to produce men when He might refrain!

‘The world rolls round for ever like a mill;
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will.

‘While air of Space and Time’s full river flow
The mill must blindly whirl unresting so:
It may be wearing out, but who can know?

‘Man might know one thing were his sight less dim;
That it whirls not to suit his petty whim,
That it is quite indifferent to him.

‘Nay, does it treat him harshly as he saith?
It grinds him some slow years of bitter breath,
Then grinds him back into eternal death.’

9

It is full strange to him who hears and feels,
   When wandering there in some deserted street,
The booming and the jar of ponderous wheels,
   The trampling clash of heavy ironshod feet:
Who is this Venice of the Black Sea rideth?
Who in this city of the stars abideth
   To buy or sell as those in daylight sweet?

The rolling thunder seems to fill the sky
   As it comes on; the horses snort and strain,
The harness jingles, as it passes by;
   The hugeness of an overburthened wain:
A man sits nodding on the shaft or trudges
Three parts asleep beside his fellow-drudges:
   And so it rolls into the night again.

What merchandise? whence, whither, and for whom?
   Perchance it is a Fate-appointed hearse,
Bearing away to some mysterious tomb
   Or Limbo of the scornful universe
The joy, the peace, the life-hope, the abortions
Of all things good which should have been our portions,
   But have been strangled by that City's curse.

10

The mansion stood apart in its own ground;
   In front thereof a fragrant garden-lawn,
High trees about it, and the whole walled round:
   The massy iron gates were both withdrawn;
And every window of its front shed light,
Portentous in that City of the Night.

But though thus lighted it was deadly still
   As all the countless bulks of solid gloom;
Perchance a congregation to fulfil
   Solemnities of silence in this doom,
Mysterious rites of dolour and despair
Permitting not a breath of chant or prayer?

Broad steps ascended to a terrace broad
   Whereon lay still light from the open door;
The hall was noble, and its aspect awed,
   Hung round with heavy black from dome to floor;
And ample stairways rose to left and right
Whose balustrades were also draped with night.

I paced from room to room, from hall to hall,
   Nor any life throughout the maze discerned;
But each was hung with its funereal pall,
   And held a shrine, around which tapers burned,
With picture or with statue or with bust,
All copied from the same fair form of dust:

A woman very young and very fair;
   Beloved by bounteous life and joy and youth,
And loving these sweet lovers, so that care
   And age and death seemed not for her in sooth:
Alike as stars, all beautiful and bright,
These shapes lit up that mausoléan night.

At length I heard a murmur as of lips,
   And reached an open oratory hung
With heaviest blackness of the whole eclipse;
   Beneath the dome a fuming censer swung;
And one lay there upon a low white bed,
With tapers burning at the foot and head:

The Lady of the images: supine,
   Deathstill, lifesweet, with folded palms she lay:
And kneeling there as at a sacred shrine
   A young man wan and worn who seemed to pray:
A crucifix of dim and ghostly white
Surmounted the large altar left in night: –

The chambers of the mansion of my heart,
In every one whereof thine image dwells,
Are black with grief eternal for thy sake.

The inmost oratory of my soul,
Wherein thou ever dwellest quick or dead,
Is black with grief eternal for thy sake.

I kneel beside thee and I clasp the cross,
With eyes for ever fixed upon that face,
So beautiful and dreadful in its calm.

I kneel here patient as thou liest there;
As patient as a statue carved in stone,
Of adoration and eternal grief.

While thou dost not awake I cannot move;
And something tells me thou wilt never wake,
And I alive feel turning into stone.

Most beautiful were Death to end my grief,
Most hateful to destroy the sight of thee,
Dear vision better than all death or life.

But I renounce all choice of life or death,
For either shall be ever at thy side,
And thus in bliss or woe be ever well. –

He murmured thus and thus in monotone,
  Intent upon that uncorrupted face,
Entranced except his moving lips alone:
  I glided with hushed footsteps from the place.
This was the festival that filled with light
That palace in the City of the Night.

11

What men are they who haunt these fatal glooms,
   And fill their living mouths with dust of death,
And make their habitations in the tombs,
   And breathe eternal sighs with mortal breath,
And pierce life's pleasant veil of various error
To reach that void of darkness and old terror
   Wherein expire the lamps of hope and faith?

They have much wisdom yet they are not wise,
   They have much goodness yet they do not well,
(The fools we know have their own Paradise,
   The wicked also have their proper Hell);
They have much strength but still their doom is stronger,
Much patience but their time endureth longer,
Much valour but life mocks it with some spell.

They are most rational and yet insane:
   An outward madness not to be controlled;
A perfect reason in the central brain,
   Which has no power, but sitteth wan and cold,
And sees the madness, and foresees as plainly
The ruin in its path, and trieth vainly
   To cheat itself refusing to behold.

And some are great in rank and wealth and power,
   And some renowned for genius and for worth;
And some are poor and mean, who brood and cower
   And shrink from notice, and accept all dearth
Of body, heart and soul, and leave to others
All boons of life: yet these and those are brothers,
   The saddest and the weariest men on earth.

Our isolated units could be brought
   To act together for some common end?
For one by one, each silent with his thought,
   I marked a long loose line approach and wend
Athwart the great cathedral's cloistered square,
And slowly vanish from the moonlit air.

Then I would follow in among the last:
   And in the porch a shrouded figure stood,
Who challenged each one pausing ere he passed,
   With deep eyes burning through a blank white hood:
Whence come you in the world of life and light
To this our City of Tremendous Night? –

From pleading in a senate of rich lords
For some scant justice to our countless hordes
Who toil half-starved with scarce a human right:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From wandering through many a solemn scene
Of opium visions, with a heart serene
And intellect miraculously bright:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From making hundreds laugh and roar with glee
By my transcendent feats of mimicry,
And humour wanton as an elfish sprite:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From prayer and fasting in a lonely cell,
Which brought an ecstasy ineffable
Of love and adoration and delight:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From ruling on a splendid kingly throne
A nation which beneath my rule has grown
Year after year in wealth and arts and might:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From preaching to an audience fired with faith
The Lamb who died to save our souls from death,
Whose blood hath washed our scarlet sins wool-white:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From drinking fiery poison in a den
Crowded with tawdry girls and squalid men,
Who hoarsely laugh and curse and brawl and fight:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From picturing with all beauty and all grace
First Eden and the parents of our race,
A luminous rapture unto all men's sight:

I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From writing a great work with patient plan
To justify the ways of God to man,
And show how ill must fade and perish quite:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

From desperate fighting with a little band
Against the powerful tyrants of our land,
To free our brethren in their own despite:
I wake from daydreams to this real night.

Thus, challenged by that warder sad and stern,
    Each one responded with his countersign,
Then entered the cathedral; and in turn
    I entered also, having given mine;
But lingered near until I heard no more,
And marked the closing of the massive door.

13

Of all things human which are strange ad wild
   This is perchance the wildest and most strange,
And showeth man most utterly beguiled,
   To those who haunt that sunless City's range;
That he bemoans himself for aye, repeating
How Time is deadly swift, how life is fleeting,
   How naught is constant on the earth but change.

The hours are heavy on him and the days;
   The burden of the mouths he scarce can bear;
And often in his secret soul he prays
   To sleep through barren periods unaware,
Arousing at some longed-for date of pleasure;
Which having passed and yielded him small treasure,
   He would outsleep another term of care.

Yet in his marvellous fancy he must make
   Quick wings for Time, and see it fly from us;
This Time which crawleth like a monstrous snake,
   Wounded and slow and very venomous;
Which creeps blindwormlike round the earth and ocean,
Distilling poison at each painful motion,
   And seems condemned to circle ever thus.

And since he cannot spend and use aright
   The little time here given him in trust,
But wasteth it in weary undelight
   Of foolish toil and trouble, strife and lust,
He naturally claimeth to inherit
The everlasting Future, that his merit
   May have full scope; as surely is most just.

O length of the intolerable hours,
   O nights that are as aeons of slow pain,
O Time, too ample for our vital powers,
   O Life, whose woeful vanities remain
Immutable for all of all our legions
Through all the centuries and in all the regions,
   Not of your speed and variance *we* complain.

We do not ask a longer term of strife,
   Weakness and weariness and nameless woes;
We do not claim renewed and endless life
   When this which is our torment here shall close,
An everlasting conscious inanition!
We yearn for speedy death in full fruition,
   Dateless oblivion and divine repose.

14

Large glooms were gathered in the mighty fane,
   With tinted moongleams slanting here and there;
And all was hush: no swelling organ-strain,
   No chant, no voice or murmuring of prayer;
No priests came forth, no tinkling censers fumed,
And the high altar space was unillumed.

Around the pillars and against the walls
   Leaned men and shadows; others seemed to brood
Bent or recumbent in secluded stalls.
   Perchance they were not a great multitude
Save in that city of so lonely streets
Where one may count up every face he meets.

All patiently awaited the event
   Without a stir or sound, as if no less
Self-occupied, doomstricken while attent.
   And then we heard a voice of solemn stress
From the dark pulpit, and our gaze there met
Two eyes which burned as never eyes burned yet:

Two steadfast and intolerable eyes
   Burning beneath a broad and rugged brow;
The head behind it of enormous size.
   And as black fir-groves in a large wind bow,
Our rooted congregation, gloom-arrayed,
By that great sad voice deep and full were swayed: –

O melancholy Brothers, dark, dark, dark!
O battling in black floods without an ark!
   O spectral wanderers of unholy Night!
My soul hath bled for you these sunless years,
With bitter blood-drops running down like tears:
   Oh dark, dark, dark, withdrawn from joy and light!

My heart is sick with anguish for your bale;
Your woe hath been my anguish; yea, I quail
   And perish in your perishing unblest.
And I have searched the highths and depths, the scope
Of all our universe, with desperate hope
   To find some solace for your wild unrest.

And now at last authentic word I bring,
Witnessed by every dead and living thing;
   Good tidings of great joy for you, for all:
There is no God; no Fiend with names divine
Made us and tortures us; if we must pine,
   It is to satiate no Being's gall.

It was the dark delusion of a dream,
That living Person conscious and supreme,
   Whom we must curse for cursing us with life;

Whom we must curse because the life He gave
Could not be buried in the quiet grave,
   Could not be killed by poison or by knife.

This little life is all we must endure,
The grave's most holy peace is ever sure,
   We fall asleep and never wake again;
Nothing is of us but the mouldering flesh,
Whose elements dissolve and merge afresh
   In earth, air, water, plants, and other men.

We finish thus; and all our wretched race
Shall finish with its cycle, and give place
   To other beings, with their own time-doom:
Infinite aeons ere our kind began;
Infinite aeons after the last man
   Has joined the mammoth in earth's tomb and womb.

We bow down to the universal laws,
Which never had for man a special clause
   Of cruelty or kindness, love or hate:
If toads and vultures are obscene to sight,
If tigers burn with beauty and with might,
   Is it by favour or by wrath of Fate?

All substance lives and struggles evermore
Through countless shapes continually at war,
   By countless interactions interknit:
If one is born a certain day on earth,
All times and forces tended to that birth,
   Not all the world could change or hinder it.

I find no hint throughout the Universe
Of good or ill, of blessing or of curse;
   I find alone Necessity Supreme;
With infinite Mystery, abysmal, dark,
Unlighted ever by the faintest spark
   For us the flitting shadows of a dream.

O Brothers of sad lives! they are so brief;
A few short years must bring us all relief:
   Can we not bear these years of labouring breath?
But if you would not this poor life fulfil,
Lo, you are free to end it when you will,
   Without the fear of waking after death. –

The organ-like vibrations of his voice
   Thrilled through the vaulted aisles and died away;
The yearning of the tones which bade rejoice
   Was sad and tender as a requiem lay:
Our shadowy congregation rested still
As brooding on that 'End it when you will.'

15

Wherever men are gathered, all the air
   Is charged with human feeling, human thought;
Each shout and cry and laugh, each curse and prayer,
   Are into its vibrations surely wrought;
Unspoken passion, wordless meditation,
Are breathed into it with our respiration;
   It is with our life fraught and overfraught.

So that no man there breathes earth's simple breath,
   As if alone on mountains or wide seas;
But nourishes warm life or hastens death
   With joys and sorrows, health and foul disease,
Wisdom and folly, good and evil labours,
Incessant of his multitudinous neighbours;
   He in his turn affecting all of these.

That City's atmosphere is dark and dense,
   Although not many exiles wander there,
With many a potent evil influence,
   Each adding poison to the poisoned air;
Infections of unutterable sadness,
Infections of incalculable madness,
   Infections of incurable despair.

16

Our shadowy congregation rested still,
   As musing on that message we had heard
And brooding on that ‘End it when you will;’
   Perchance awaiting yet some other word;
When keen as lightning through a muffled sky
Sprang forth a shrill and lamentable cry: –

The man speaks sooth, alas! the man speaks sooth:
   We have no personal life beyond the grave;
There is no God; Fate knows nor wrath nor ruth:
   Can I find here the comfort which I crave?

In all eternity I had one chance,
   One few years’ term of gracious human life:
The splendours of the intellect’s advance,
   The sweetness of the home with babes and wife;

The social pleasures with their genial wit;
   The fascination of the worlds of art,
The glories of the worlds of nature, lit
   By large imagination’s glowing heart;

The rapture of mere being, full of health;
   The careless childhood and the ardent youth,
The strenuous manhood winning various wealth,
   The reverend age serene with life’s long truth:

All the sublime prerogatives of Man;
   The storied memories of the times of old,
The patient tracking of the world’s great plan
   Through sequences and changes myriadfold.

This chance was never offered me before;
   For me this infinite Past is blank and dumb:
This chance recurreth never, nevermore;
   Blank, blank for me the infinite To-come.

And this sole chance was frustrate from my birth,
   A mockery, a delusion; and my breath
Of noble human life upon this earth
   So racks me that I sigh for senseless death.

My wine of life is poison mixed with gall,
   My noonday passes in a nightmare dream,
I worse than lose the years which are my all:
   What can console me for the loss supreme?

Speak not of comfort where no comfort is,
   Speak not at all: can words make foul things fair?
Our life’s a cheat, our death a black abyss:
   Hush and be mute envisaging despair. –

This vehement voice came from the northern aisle
   Rapid and shrill to its abrupt harsh close;
And none gave answer for a certain while,
   For words must shrink from these most wordless woes;
At last the pulpit speaker simply said,
With humid eyes and thoughtful drooping head: –

My Brother, my poor Brothers, it is thus;
This life itself holds nothing good for us,
   But it ends soon and nevermore can be;
And we knew nothing of it ere our birth,
And shall know nothing when consigned to earth:
   I ponder these thoughts and they comfort me.

17

How the moon triumphs through the endless nights!
   How the stars throb and glitter as they wheel
Their thick processions of supernal lights
   Around the blue vault obdurate as steel!
And men regard with passionate awe and yearning
The mighty marching and the golden burning,
   And think the heavens respond to what they feel.

Boats gliding like dark shadows of a dream,
   Are glorified from vision as they pass
The quivering moonbridge on the deep black stream;
   Cold windows kindle their dead glooms of glass
To restless crystals; cornice, dome, and column
Emerge from chaos in the splendour solemn;
   Like faëry lakes gleam lawns of dewy grass.

With such a living light these dead eyes shine,
   These eyes of sightless heaven, that as we gaze
We read a pity, tremulous, divine,
   Or cold majestic scorn in their pure rays:
Fond man! they are not haughty, are not tender;
There is no heart or mind in all their splendour,
   They thread mere puppets all their marvellous maze.

If we could near them with the flight unflown,
   We should but find them worlds as sad as this,
Or suns all self-consuming like our own
   Enringed by planet worlds as much amiss:
They wax and wane through fusion and confusion;
The spheres eternal are a grand illusion,
   The empyréan is a void abyss.

18

I wandered in a suburb of the north,
   And reached a spot whence three close lanes led down,
Beneath thick trees and hedgerows winding forth
   Like deep brook channels, deep and dark and lown:
The air above was wan with misty light,
The dull grey south showed one vague blur of white.

I took the left-hand lane and slowly trod
   Its earthen footpath, brushing as I went
The humid leafage; and my feet were shod
   With heavy languor, and my frame downbent,
With infinite sleepless weariness outworn,
So many nights I thus had paced forlorn.

After a hundred steps I grew aware
   Of something crawling in the lane below;
It seemed a wounded creature prostrate there
   That sobbed with pangs in making progress slow,
The hind limbs stretched to push, the fore limbs then
To drag; for it would die in its own den.

But coming level with it I discerned
   That it had been a man; for at my tread
It stopped in its sore travail and half-turned,
   Leaning upon its right, and raised its head,
And with the left hand twitched back as in ire
Long grey unreverend locks befouled with mire.

A haggard filthy face with bloodshot eyes,
   An infamy for manhood to behold.
He gasped all trembling, What, you want my prize?
   You leave, to rob me, wine and lust and gold
And all that men go mad upon, since you
Have traced my sacred secret of the clue?

You think that I am weak and must submit;
   Yet I but scratch you with this poisoned blade,
And you are dead as if I clove with it
   That false fierce greedy heart. Betrayed! betrayed!
I fling this phial if you seek to pass,
And you are forthwith shrivelled up like grass.

And then with sudden change, Take thought! take thought!
   Have pity on me! it is mine alone.
If you could find, it would avail you naught;
   Seek elsewhere on the pathway of your own:
For who of mortal or immortal race
The lifetrack of another can retrace?

Did you but know my agony and toil!
   Two lanes diverge up yonder from this lane;
My thin blood marks the long length of their soil;

Such clue I left, who sought my clue in vain:
My hands and knees are worn both flesh and bone;
I cannot move but with continual moan.

But I am in the very way at last
To find the long-lost broken golden thread
Which unites my present with my past,
If you but go your own way. And I said,
I will retire as soon as you have told
Whereunto leadeth this lost thread of gold.

And so you know it not! he hissed with scorn;
I feared you, imbecile! It leads me back
From this accursed night without a morn,
And through the deserts which have else no track,
And through vast wastes of horror-haunted time,
To Eden innocence in Eden's clime:

And I become a nursling soft and pure,
An infant cradled on its mother's knee,
Without a past, love-cherished and secure;
Which if it saw this loathsome present Me,
Would plunge its face into the pillowing breast,
And scream abhorrence hard to lull to rest.

He turned to grope; and I retiring brushed
Thin shreds of gossamer from off my face,
And mused, His life would grow, the germ uncrushed;
He should to antenatal night retrace,
And hide his elements in that large womb
Beyond the reach of man-evolving Doom.

And even thus, what weary way were planned,
To seek oblivion through the far-off gate
Of birth, when that of death is close at hand!
For this is law, if law there be in Fate:
What never has been, yet may have its when;
The thing which has been, never is again.

19

The mighty river flowing dark and deep,
   With ebb and flood from the remote sea-tides
Vague-sounding through the City's sleepless sleep,
   Is named the River of the Suicides;
For night by night some lorn wretch overweary,
And shuddering from the future yet more dreary,
   Within its cold secure oblivion hides.

One plunges from a bridge's parapet,
   As by some blind and sudden frenzy hurled;
Another wades in slow with purpose set
   Until the waters are above him furled;
Another in a boat with dreamlike motion
Glides drifting down into the desert ocean,
   To starve or sink from out the desert world.

They perish from their suffering surely thus,
   For none beholding them attempts to save,
The while each thinks how soon, solicitous,
   He may seek refuge in the self-same wave;
Some hour when tired of ever-vain endurance
Impatience will forerun the sweet assurance
   Of perfect peace eventual in the grave.

When this poor tragic-farce has palled us long,
   Why actors and spectators do we stay? –
To fill our so-short *rôles* out right or wrong;
   To see what shifts are yet in the dull play
For our illusion; to refrain from grieving
Dear foolish friends by our untimely leaving:
   But those asleep at home, how blest are they!

Yet it is but for one night after all:
   What matters one brief night of dreary pain?
When after it the weary eyelids fall
   Upon the weary eyes and wasted brain;
And all sad scenes and thoughts and feelings vanish
In that sweet sleep no power can ever banish,
   That one best sleep which never wakes again.

20

I sat me weary on a pillar's base,
   And leaned against the shaft; for broad moonlight
O'erflowed the peacefulness of cloistered space,
   A shore of shadow slanting from the right:
The great cathedral's western front stood there,
A wave-worn rock in that calm sea of air.

Before it, opposite my place of rest,
   Two figures faced each other, large, austere;
A couchant sphinx in shadow to the breast,
   An angel standing in the moonlight clear;
So mighty by magnificence of form,
They were not dwarfed beneath that mass enorm.

Upon the cross-hilt of a naked sword
   The angel's hands, as prompt to smite, were held;
His vigilant intense regard was poured
   Upon the creature placidly unquelled,
Whose front was set at level gaze which took
No heed of aught, a solemn trance-like look.

And as I pondered these opposed shapes
   My eyelids sank in stupor, that dull swoon
Which drugs and with a leaden mantle drapes
   The outworn to worse weariness. But soon
A sharp and clashing noise the stillness broke,
And from the evil lethargy I woke.

The angel's wings had fallen, stone on stone,
   And lay there shattered; hence the sudden sound:
A warrior leaning on his sword alone
   Now watched the sphinx with that regard profound;
The sphinx unchanged looked forthright, as aware
Of nothing in the vast abyss of air.

Again I sank in that repose unsweet,
   Again a clashing noise my slumber rent;
The warrior's sword lay broken at his feet:
   An unarmed man with raised hands impotent
Now stood before the sphinx, which ever kept
Such mien as if with open eyes it slept.

My eyelids sank in spite of wonder grown;
   A louder crash upstartled me in dread:
The man had fallen forward, stone on stone,
   And lay there shattered, with his trunkless head
Between the monster's large quiscent paws,
Beneath its grand front changeless as life's laws.

The moon had circled westward full and bright,
   And made the temple-front a mystic dream,
And bathed the whole enclosure with its light,

The sworded angel's wrecks, the sphinx supreme:
I pondered long that cold majestic face
Whose vision seemed of infinite void space.

21

Anear the centre of that northern crest
   Stands out a level upland bleak and bare,
From which the city east and south and west
   Sinks gently in long waves; and thronèd there
An Image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
The bronze colossus of a wingèd Woman,
   Upon a graded granite base foursquare.

Low-seated she leans forward massively,
   With cheek on clenched left hand, the forearm's might
Erect, its elbow on her rounded knee;
   Across a clasped book in her lap the right
Upholds a pair of compasses; she gazes
With full set eyes, but wandering in thick mazes
   Of sombre thought beholds no outward sight.

Words cannot picture her; but all men know
   That solemn sketch the pure sad artist wrought
Three centuries and threescore years ago,
   With phantasies of his peculiar thought:
The instruments of carpentry and science
Scattered about her feet, in strange alliance
   With the keen wolf-hound sleeping undistraught;

Scales, hour-glass, bell, and magic-square above;
   The grave and solid infant perched beside,
With open winglets that might bear a dove,
   Intent upon its tablets, heavy-eyed;
Her folded wings as of a mighty eagle,
But all too impotent to lift the regal
   Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride;

And with those wings, and that light wreath which seems
   To mock her grand head and the knotted frown
Of forehead charged with baleful thoughts and dreams,
   The household bunch of keys, the housewife's gown
Voluminous, indented, and yet rigid
As if a shell of burnished metal frigid,
   The feet thick-shod to tread all weakness down;

The comet hanging o'er the waste dark seas,
   The massy rainbow curved in front of it
Beyond the village with the masts and trees;
   The snaky imp, dog-headed, from the Pit,
Bearing upon its batlike leathern pinions
Her name unfolded in the sun's dominions,
   The 'MELENCOLIA' that transcends all wit.

Thus has the artist copied her, and thus
   Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
Her fate heroic and calamitous;
   Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,

Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration
   Of the day setting on her baffled prime.

Baffled and beaten back she works on still,
   Weary and sick of soul she works the more,
Sustained by her indomitable will:
   The hands shall fashion and the brain shall pore,
And all her sorrow shall be turned to labour,
Till Death the friend-foe piercing with his sabre
   That mighty heart of hearts ends bitter war.

But as if blacker night could dawn on night,
   With tenfold gloom on moonless night unstarred,
A sense more tragic than defeat and blight,
   More desperate than strife with hope debarred,
More fatal than the adamantine Never
Encompassing her passionate endeavour,
   Dawns glooming in her tenebrous regard:

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
   Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
   Because they have no secret to express;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
   That all is vanity and nothingness.

Titanic from her high throne in the north,
   That City's sombre Patroness and Queen,
In bronze sublimity she gazes forth
   Over her Capital of teen and threne,
Over the river with its isles and bridges,
The marsh and moorland, to the stern rock-ridges,
   Confronting them with a coëval mien.

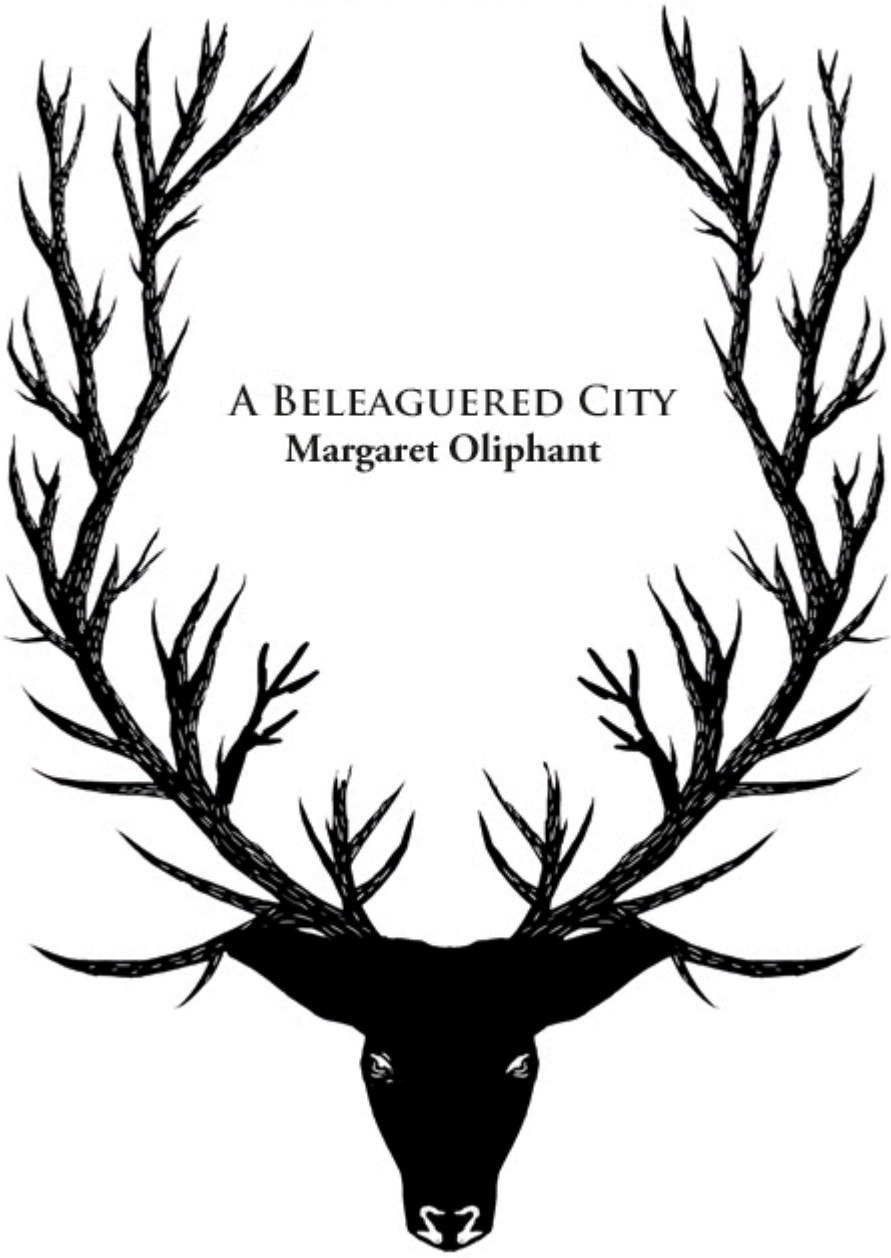
The moving moon and stars from east to west
   Circle before her in the sea of air;
Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.
   Her subjects often gaze up to her there:
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance
   And confirmation of the old despair.

Footnotes

fn1 Though the Garden of thy Life be wholly waste, the sweet flowers withered, the fruit-trees barren, over its wall hang ever the rich dark clusters of the Vine of Death, within easy reach of thy hand, which may pluck of them when it will.

fn2 Life divided by that persistent three $= \frac{\text{LXX}}{333} = .\dot{2}\dot{1}\dot{0}.$

SCOTTISH
GOTHIC



A Beleaguered City

Margaret Oliphant

‘But whether the unseen life has changed, or if it is I who am not worthy their attention, this I know that I stood in our city like a ghost, and no one took any heed of me.’

About the Author

Margaret Oliphant (1828–1897) was born Margaret Wilson in East Lothian and she spent her childhood in both Glasgow and Liverpool. She wrote for much of her childhood and had her first novel published in 1849. More novels followed and she also became a regular contributor to *Blackwoods* Magazine. Oliphant married a cousin, Frank Oliphant in 1852 and they moved to London where they lived until Frank became ill with tuberculosis. For the sake of his health they moved to Florence, Italy, but Frank died in 1859. Oliphant was left with three young children to support, which she did through her writing. A few years later she was also supporting her alcoholic brother and his children. Between 1865 and her death in 1897, Oliphant produced around ninety works including novels, biographies, historical and geographical books.

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CHAPTER 1

The Narrative of M. le Maire: The Condition of the City

I, Martin Dupin (de la Clairière), had the honour of holding the office of Maire in the town of Semur, in the Haute Bourgogne, at the time when the following events occurred. It will be perceived therefore, that no one could have more complete knowledge of the facts – at once from my official position, and from the place of eminence in the affairs of the district generally which my family has held for many generations – by what citizen-like virtues and unblemished integrity I will not be vain enough to specify. Nor is it necessary; for no one who knows Semur can be ignorant of the position held by the Dupins, from father to son. The estate La Clairière has been so long in the family that we might very well, were we disposed, add its name to our own, as so many families in France do; and, indeed, I do not prevent my wife (whose prejudices I respect) from making this use of it upon her cards. But, for myself, *bourgeois* I was born and *bourgeois* I mean to die. My residence, like that of my father and grandfather, is at No. 29 in the Grande Rue, opposite the Cathedral, and not far from the Hospital of St Jean. We inhabit the first floor, along with the *rez-de-chaussée*, which has been turned into domestic offices suitable for the needs of the family. My mother, holding a respected place in my household, lives with us in the most perfect family union. My wife (*née* de Champfleurie) is everything that is calculated to render a household happy; but, alas! one only of our two children survives to bless us. I have thought these details of my private circumstances necessary, to explain the following narrative; to which I will also add, by way of introduction, a simple sketch of the town itself and its general conditions before these remarkable events occurred.

It was on a summer evening about sunset, the middle of the month of June, that my attention was attracted by an incident of no importance which occurred in the street, when I was making my way home, after an inspection of the young vines in my new vineyard to the left of La Clairière. All were in perfectly good condition, and none of the many signs which point to the arrival of the insect were apparent. I had come back in good spirits, thinking of the prosperity which I was happy to believe I had merited by a conscientious performance of all my duties. I had little with which to blame myself: not only my wife and relations, but my dependants and neighbours, approved my conduct as a man; and even my fellow-citizens, exacting as they are, had confirmed in my favour the good opinion which my family had been fortunate enough to secure from father to son. These thoughts were in my mind as I turned the corner of the Grande Rue and approached my own house. At this moment the tinkle of a little bell warned all the bystanders of the procession which was about to pass, carrying the rites of the Church to some dying person. Some of the women, always devout, fell on their knees. I did not go so far as this, for I do not pretend, in these days of progress, to have retained the same attitude of mind as that which it is no doubt becoming to behold in the more devout sex; but I stood respectfully out of the way, and took off my hat, as good breeding alone, if nothing else, demanded of me. Just in front of me, however, was Jacques Richard, always a troublesome individual, standing doggedly, with his hat upon his head and his hands in his pockets, straight in the path of M. le Curé. There is not in all France a more obstinate fellow. He stood there, notwithstanding the efforts of a good woman to draw him away, and though I myself called to him. M. le Curé is not the man to flinch; and as he passed, walking as usual very quickly and straight, his soutane brushed against the blouse of Jacques. He gave one quick glance from beneath his eyebrows at the profane interruption, but he would not distract himself from his sacred errand at such a moment. It *is* a sacred errand when any one, be he priest or layman, carries the best he can give to the bedside of the dying. I said this to Jacques when M. le Curé had passed and the bell went tinkling on along the street. ‘Jacques,’ said I, ‘I do not call it impious, like this good woman, but I call it inhuman. What! a man goes to carry help to the dying, and you show him no respect!’

This brought the colour to his face; and I think, perhaps, that he might have become ashamed of the part he had played; but the women pushed in again, as they are so fond of doing. ‘Oh, M. le Maire, he

does not deserve that you should lose your words upon him!' they cried; 'and, besides, is it likely he will pay any attention to you when he tries to stop even the *bon Dieu*?'

'The *bon Dieu*!' cried Jacques. 'Why doesn't He clear the way for himself? Look here. I do not care one farthing for your *bon Dieu.* Here is mine; I carry him about with me.' And he took a piece of a hundred sous out of his pocket (how had it got there?) '*Vive l'argent!*' he said. 'You know it yourself, though you will not say so. There is no *bon Dieu* but money. With money you can do anything. *L'argent c'est le bon Dieu*.'

'Be silent,' I cried, 'thou profane one!' And the women were still more indignant than I. 'We shall see, we shall see; when he is ill and would give his soul for something to wet his lips, his *bon Dieu* will not do much for him,' cried one; and another said, clasping her hands with a shrill cry, 'It is enough to make the dead rise out of their graves!'

'The dead rise out of their graves!' These words, though one has heard them before, took possession of my imagination. I saw the rude fellow go along the street as I went on, tossing the coin in his hand. One time it fell to the ground and rang upon the pavement, and he laughed more loudly as he picked it up. He was walking towards the sunset, and I too, at a distance after. The sky was full of rose-tinted clouds floating across the blue, floating high over the grey pinnacles of the Cathedral, and filling the long open line of the Rue St Etienne down which he was going. As I crossed to my own house I caught him full against the light, in his blue blouse, tossing the big silver piece in the air, and heard him laugh and shout '*Vive l'argent!* This is the only *bon Dieu*.' Though there are many people who live as if this were their sentiment, there are few who give it such brutal expression; but some of the people at the corner of the street laughed too. 'Bravo, Jacques!' they cried; and one said, 'You are right, *mon ami*, the only god to trust in nowadays.' 'It is a short *credo*, M. le Maire,' said another, who caught my eye. He saw I was displeased, this one, and his countenance changed at once.

'Yes, Jean Pierre,' I said, 'it is worse than short – it is brutal. I hope no man who respects himself will ever countenance it. It is against the dignity of human nature, if nothing more.'

'Ah, M. le Maire!' cried a poor woman, one of the good ladies of the market, with entrenchments of baskets all round her, who had been walking my way; 'ah, M. le Maire! did not I say true? it is enough to bring the dead out of their graves.'

'That would be something to see,' said Jean Pierre, with a laugh; 'and I hope, *ma bonne femme*, that if you have any interest with them, you will entreat these gentlemen to appear before I go away.'

'I do not like such jesting,' said I. 'The dead are very dead and will not disturb anybody, but even the prejudices of respectable persons ought to be respected. A ribald like Jacques counts for nothing, but I did not expect this from you.'

'What would you, M. le Maire?' he said, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'We are made like that. I respect prejudices as you say. My wife is a good woman, she prays for two – but me! How can I tell that Jacques is not right after all? A *grosse pièce* of a hundred sous, one sees that, one knows what it can do – but for the other!' He thrust up one shoulder to his ear, and turned up the palms of his hands.

'It is our duty at all times to respect the convictions of others,' I said, severely; and passed on to my own house, having no desire to encourage discussions at the street corner. A man in my position is obliged to be always mindful of the example he ought to set. But I had not yet done with this phrase, which had, as I have said, caught my ear and my imagination. My mother was in the great *salle* of the *rez-de-chaussée*, as I passed, in altercation with a peasant who had just brought us in some loads of wood. There is often, it seems to me, a sort of *refrain* in conversation, which one catches everywhere as one comes and goes. Figure my astonishment when I heard from the lips of my good mother the same words with which that good-for-nothing Jacques Richard had made the profession of his brutal faith. 'Go!' she cried, in anger; 'you are all the same. Money is your god. *De grosses pièces*, that is all you think of in these days.'

'*Eh, bien*, madame,' said the peasant; 'and if so, what then? Don't you others, gentlemen and ladies, do just the same? What is there in the world but money to think of? If it is a question of marriage, you demand what is the *dot*; if it is a question of office, you ask, Monsieur Untel, is he rich? And it is perfectly just. We know what money can do; but as for *le bon Dieu*, whom our grandmothers used to talk about—'

And lo! our *gros paysan* made exactly the same gesture as Jean Pierre. He put up his shoulders to his ears, and spread out the palms of his hands, as who should say, There is nothing further to be said.

Then there occurred a still more remarkable repetition. My mother, as may be supposed, being a very respectable person, and more or less *dévote*, grew red with indignation and horror.

'Oh, these poor grandmothers!' she cried; 'God give them rest! It is enough to make the dead rise out of their graves.'

'Oh, I will answer for *les morts*! they will give nobody any trouble,' he said with a laugh. I went in and

reproved the man severely, finding that, as I supposed, he had attempted to cheat my good mother in the price of the wood. Fortunately she had been quite as clever as he was. She went upstairs shaking her head, while I gave the man to understand that no one should speak to her but with the profoundest respect in my house. 'She has her opinions, like all respectable ladies,' I said, 'but under this roof these opinions shall always be sacred.' And, to do him justice, I will add that when it was put to him in this way Gros-Jean was ashamed of himself.

When I talked over these incidents with my wife, as we gave each other the narrative of our day's experiences, she was greatly distressed, as may be supposed. 'I try to hope they are not so bad as Bonne Maman thinks. But oh, *mon ami*!' she said, 'what will the world come to if this is what they really believe?'

'Take courage,' I said; 'the world will never come to anything much different from what it is. So long as there are *des anges* like thee to pray for us, the scale will not go down to the wrong side.'

I said this, of course, to please my Agnès, who is the best of wives; but on thinking it over after, I could not but be struck with the extreme justice (not to speak of the beauty of the sentiment) of this thought. The *bon Dieu* – if, indeed, that great Being is as represented to us by the Church – must naturally care as much for one-half of His creatures as for the other, though they have not the same weight in the world; and consequently the faith of the women must hold the balance straight, especially if, as is said, they exceed us in point of numbers. This leaves a little margin for those of them who profess the same freedom of thought as is generally accorded to men – a class, I must add, which I abominate from the bottom of my heart.

I need not dwell upon other little scenes which impressed the same idea still more upon my mind. Semur, I need not say, is not the centre of the world, and might, therefore, be supposed likely to escape the full current of worldliness. We amuse ourselves little, and we have not any opportunity of rising to the heights of ambition; for our town is not even the *chef-lieu* of the department, – though this is a subject upon which I cannot trust myself to speak. Figure to yourself that La Rochette – a place of yesterday, without either the beauty or the antiquity of Semur – has been chosen as the centre of affairs, the residence of M. le Préfet! But I will not enter upon this question. What I was saying was, that, notwithstanding the fact that we amuse ourselves but little, that there is no theatre to speak of, little society, few distractions, and none of those inducements to strive for gain and to indulge the senses, which exist, for instance, in Paris – that capital of the world – yet, nevertheless, the thirst for money and for pleasure has increased among us to an extent which I cannot but consider alarming. Gros-Jean, our peasant, toils for money, and hoards; Jacques, who is a cooper and maker of wine casks, gains and drinks; Jean Pierre snatches at every sous that comes in his way, and spends it in yet worse dissipations. He is one who quails when he meets my eye; he sins *en cachette*; but Jacques is bold, and defies opinion; and Gros-Jean is firm in the belief that to hoard money is the highest of mortal occupations. These three are types of what the population is at Semur. The men would all sell their souls for a *grosse pièce* of fifty sous – indeed, they would laugh, and express their delight that any one should believe them to have souls, if they could but have a chance of selling them: and the devil, who was once supposed to deal in that commodity, would be very welcome among us. And as for the *bon Dieu – pouff!* that was an affair of the grandmothers – *le bon Dieu c'est l'argent.* This is their creed. I was very near the beginning of my official year as Maire when my attention was called to these matters as I have described above. A man may go on for years keeping quiet himself – keeping out of tumult, religious or political – and make no discovery of the general current of feeling; but when you are forced to serve your country in any official capacity, and when your eyes are opened to the state of affairs around you, then I allow that an inexperienced observer might well cry out, as my wife did, 'What will become of the world?' I am not prejudiced myself – unnecessary to say that the foolish scruples of the women do not move me. But the devotion of the community at large to this pursuit of gain – money without any grandeur, and pleasure without any refinement – that is a thing which cannot fail to wound all who believe in human nature. To be a millionaire – that, I grant, would be pleasant. A man as rich as Monte Christo, able to do whatever he would, with the equipage of an English duke, the palace of an Italian prince, the retinue of a Russian noble – he, indeed, might be excused if his money seemed to him a kind of god. But Gros-Jean, who lays up two sous at a time, and lives on black bread and an onion; and Jacques, whose *grosse pièce* but secures him the headache of a drunkard next morning – what to them could be this miserable deity? As for myself, however, it was my business, as Maire of the commune, to take as little notice as possible of the follies these people might say, and to hold the middle course between the prejudices of the respectable and the levities of the foolish. With this, without more, to think of, I had enough to keep all my faculties employed.

CHAPTER 2

The Narrative of M. le Maire Continued: Beginning of the Late Remarkable Events

I do not attempt to make out any distinct connection between the simple incidents above recorded, and the extraordinary events that followed. I have related them as they happened; chiefly by way of showing the state of feeling in the city, and the sentiment which pervaded the community – a sentiment, I fear, too common in my country. I need not say that to encourage superstition is far from my wish. I am a man of my century, and proud of being so; very little disposed to yield to the domination of the clerical party, though desirous of showing all just tolerance for conscientious faith, and every respect for the prejudices of the ladies of my family. I am, moreover, all the more inclined to be careful of giving in my adhesion to any prodigy, in consequence of a consciousness that the faculty of imagination has always been one of my characteristics. It usually is so, I am aware, in superior minds, and it has procured me many pleasures unknown to the common herd. Had it been possible for me to believe that I had been misled by this faculty, I should have carefully refrained from putting upon record any account of my individual impressions; but my attitude here is not that of a man recording his personal experiences only, but of one who is the official mouthpiece and representative of the commune, and whose duty it is to render to government and to the human race a true narrative of the very wonderful facts to which every citizen of Semur can bear witness. In this capacity it has become my duty so to arrange and edit the different accounts of the mystery, as to present one coherent and trustworthy chronicle to the world.

To proceed, however, with my narrative. It is not necessary for me to describe what summer is in the Haute Bourgogne. Our generous wines, our glorious fruits, are sufficient proof, without any assertion on my part. The summer with us is as a perpetual *fête* – at least, before the insect appeared it was so, though now anxiety about the condition of our vines may cloud our enjoyment of the glorious sunshine which ripens them hourly before our eyes. Judge, then, of the astonishment of the world when there suddenly came upon us a darkness as in the depth of winter, falling, without warning, into the midst of the brilliant weather to which we are accustomed, and which had never failed us before in the memory of man! It was the month of July, when, in ordinary seasons, a cloud is so rare that it is a joy to see one, merely as a variety upon the brightness. Suddenly, in the midst of our summer delights, this darkness came. Its first appearance took us so entirely by surprise that life seemed to stop short, and the business of the whole town was delayed by an hour or two; nobody being able to believe that at six o'clock in the morning the sun had not risen. I do not assert that the sun did not rise; all I mean to say is that at Semur it was still dark, as in a morning of winter, and when it gradually and slowly became day many hours of the morning were already spent. And never shall I forget the aspect of day when it came. It was like a ghost or pale shadow of the glorious days of July with which we are usually blessed. The barometer did not go down, nor was there any rain, but an unusual greyness wrapped earth and sky. I heard people say in the streets, and I am aware that the same words came to my own lips: 'If it were not full summer, I should say it was going to snow.' We have much snow in the Haute Bourgogne, and we are well acquainted with this aspect of the skies. Of the depressing effect which this greyness exercised upon myself personally, I will not speak. I have always been noted as a man of fine perceptions, and I was aware instinctively that such a state of the atmosphere must mean something more than was apparent on the surface. But, as the danger was of an entirely unprecedented character, it is not to be wondered at that I should be completely at a loss to divine what its meaning was. It was a blight some people said; and many were of the opinion that it was caused by clouds of animalculæ coming, as is described in ancient writings, to destroy the crops, and even to affect the health of the population. The doctors scoffed at this; but they talked about malaria, which, as far as I could understand, was likely to produce exactly the same effect. The night closed in early as the day had dawned late; the lamps were lighted before six o'clock and daylight had only begun about ten! Figure to yourself, a July day! There ought to have been a

moon almost at the full; but no moon was visible, no stars – nothing but a grey veil of clouds, growing darker and darker as the moments went on; such I have heard are the days and the nights in England, where the sea-fogs so often blot out the sky. But we are unacquainted with anything of the kind in our *plaisant pays de France.* There was nothing else talked of in Semur all that night, as may well be imagined. My own mind was extremely uneasy. Do what I would, I could not deliver myself from a sense of something dreadful in the air which was neither malaria nor animalculæ. I took a promenade through the streets that evening, accompanied by M. Barbou, my *adjoint*, to make sure that all was safe; and the darkness was such that we almost lost our way, though we were both born in the town and had known every turning from our boyhood. It cannot be denied that Semur is very badly lighted. We retain still the lanterns slung by cords across the streets which once were general in France, but which, in most places, have been superseded by the modern institution of gas. Gladly would I have distinguished my term of office by bringing gas to Semur. But the expense would have been great, and there were a hundred objections. In summer generally, the lanterns were of little consequence because of the brightness of the sky; but to see them now, twinkling dimly here and there, making us conscious how dark it was, was strange indeed. It was in the interests of order that we took our round, with a fear, in my mind at least, of I knew not what. M. l'Adjoint said nothing, but no doubt he thought as I did.

While we were thus patrolling the city with a special eye to the prevention of all seditious assemblages, such as are too apt to take advantage of any circumstances that may disturb the ordinary life of a city, or throw discredit on its magistrates, we were accosted by Paul Lecamus, a man whom I have always considered as something of a visionary, though his conduct is irreproachable, and his life honourable and industrious. He entertains religious convictions of a curious kind; but, as the man is quite free from revolutionary sentiments, I have never considered it to be my duty to interfere with him, or to investigate his creed. Indeed, he has been treated generally in Semur as a dreamer of dreams – one who holds a great many impracticable and foolish opinions – though the respect which I always exact for those whose lives are respectable and worthy has been a protection to him. He was, I think, aware that he owed something to my good offices, and it was to me accordingly that he addressed himself.

'Good evening, M. le Maire,' he said; 'you are groping about, like myself, in this strange night.'

'Good evening, M. Paul,' I replied. 'It is, indeed, a strange night. It indicates, I fear, that a storm is coming.'

M. Paul shook his head. There is a solemnity about even his ordinary appearance. He has a long face, pale, and adorned with a heavy, drooping moustache, which adds much to the solemn impression made by his countenance. He looked at me with great gravity as he stood in the shadow of the lamp, and slowly shook his head.

'You do not agree with me? Well! the opinion of a man like M. Paul Lecamus is always worthy to be heard.'

'Oh!' he said, 'I am called visionary. I am not supposed to be a trustworthy witness. Nevertheless, if M. Le Maire will come with me, I will show him something that is very strange – something that is almost more wonderful than the darkness – more strange,' he went on with great earnestness, 'than any storm that ever ravaged Burgundy.'

'That is much to say. A tempest now when the vines are in full bearing—'

'Would be nothing, nothing to what I can show you. Only come with me to the Porte St Lambert.'

'If M. le Maire will excuse me,' said M. Barbou, 'I think I will go home. It is a little cold, and you are aware that I am always afraid of the damp.' In fact, our coats were beaded with a cold dew as in November, and I could not but acknowledge that my respectable colleague had reason. Besides, we were close to his house, and he had, no doubt, the sustaining consciousness of having done everything that was really incumbent upon him. 'Our ways lie together as far as my house,' he said, with a slight chattering of his teeth. No doubt it was the cold. After we had walked with him to his door, we proceeded to the Porte St Lambert. By this time almost everybody had re-entered their houses. The streets were very dark, and they were also very still. When we reached the gates, at that hour of the night, we found them shut as a matter of course. The officers of the *octroi* were standing close together at the door of their office, in which the lamp was burning. The very lamp seemed oppressed by the heavy air; it burnt dully, surrounded with a yellow haze. The men had the appearance of suffering greatly from cold. They received me with a satisfaction which was very gratifying to me. 'At length here is M. le Maire himself,' they said.

'My good friends,' said I, 'you have a cold post to-night. The weather has changed in the most extraordinary way. I have no doubt the scientific gentlemen at the Musée will be able to tell us all about it – M. de Clairon—'

'Not to interrupt M. le Maire,' said Riou, of the *octroi*, 'I think there is more in it than any scientific

gentleman can explain.'

'Ah! You think so. But they explain everything,' I said, with a smile. 'They tell us how the wind is going to blow.'

As I said this, there seemed to pass us, from the direction of the closed gates, a breath of air so cold that I could not restrain a shiver. They looked at each other. It was not a smile that passed between them – they were too pale, too cold, to smile: but a look of intelligence. 'M. le Maire,' said one of them, 'perceives it too;' but they did not shiver as I did. They were like men turned into ice who could feel no more.

'It is, without doubt, the most extraordinary weather,' I said. My teeth chattered like Barbou's. It was all I could do to keep myself steady. No one made any reply; but Lecamus said, 'Have the gooodness to open the little postern for foot-passengers: M. le Maire wishes to make an inspection outside.'

Upon these words, Riou, who knew me well, caught me by the arm. 'A thousand pardons,' he said, 'M. le Maire; but I entreat you, do not go. Who can tell what is outside? Since this morning there is something very strange on the other side of the gates. If M. le Maire would listen to me, he would keep them shut night and day till *that* is gone, he would not go out into the midst of it. *Mon Dieu!* a man may be brave. I know the courage of M. le Maire; but to march without necessity into the jaws of hell: *mon Dieu!*' cried the poor man again. He crossed himself, and none of us smiled. Now a man may sign himself at the church door – one does so out of respect; but to use that ceremony for one's own advantage, before other men, is rare – except in the case of members of a very decided party. Riou was not one of these. He signed himself in sight of us all, and not one of us smiled.

The other was less familiar – he knew me only in my public capacity – he was one Gallais of the Quartier St Médon. He said, taking off his hat: 'If I were M. le Maire, saving your respect, I would not go out into an unknown danger with this man here, a man who is known as a pietest, as a clerical, as one who sees visions—'

'He is not a clerical, he is a good citizen,' I said; 'come, lend us your lantern. Shall I shrink from my duty wherever it leads me? Nay, my good friends, the Maire of a French commune fears neither man nor devil in the exercise of his duty. M. Paul, lead on.' When I said the word 'devil' a spasm of alarm passed over Riou's face. He crossed himself again. This time I could not but smile. 'My little Riou,' I said, 'do you know that you are a little imbecile with your piety? There is a time for everything.'

'Except religion, M. le Maire; that is never out of place,' said Gallais.

I could not believe my senses. 'Is it a conversion?' I said. 'Some of our *Carmes déchaussés* must have passed this way.'

'M. le Maire will soon see other teachers more wonderful than the *Carmes déchaussés*,' said Lecamus. He went and took down the lantern from its nail, and opened the little door. When it opened, I was once more penetrated by the same icy breath; once, twice, thrice, I cannot tell how many times this crossed me, as if some one passed. I looked round upon the others – I gave way a step. I could not help it. In spite of me, the hair seemed to rise erect on my head. The two officers stood close together, and Riou, collecting his courage, made an attempt to laugh. 'M. le Maire perceives,' he said, his lips trembling almost too much to form the words, 'that the winds are walking about.' 'Hush, for God's sake!' said the other, grasping him by the arm.

This recalled me to myself; and I followed Lecamus, who stood waiting for me holding the door a little ajar. He went on strangely, like – I can use no other words to express it – a man making his way in the face of a crowd, a thing very surprising to me. I followed him close; but the moment I emerged from the doorway something caught my breath. The same feeling seized me also. I gasped; a sense of suffocation came upon me; I put out my hand to lay hold upon my guide. The solid grasp I got of his arm re-assured me a little, and he did not hesitate, but pushed his way on. We got out clear of the gate and the shadow of the wall, keeping close to the little watch-tower on the west side. Then he made a pause, and so did I. We stood against the tower and looked out before us. There was nothing there. The darkness was great, yet through the gloom of the night I could see the division of the road from the broken ground on either side; there was nothing there. I gasped, and drew myself up close against the wall, as Lecamus had also done. There was in the air, in the night, a sensation the most strange I have ever experienced. I have felt the same thing indeed at other times, in face of a great crowd, when thousands of people were moving, rustling, struggling, breathing around me, thronging all the vacant space, filling up every spot. This was the sensation that overwhelmed me here – a crowd: yet nothing to be seen but the darkness, the indistinct line of the road. We could not move for them, so close were they round us. What do I say? There was nobody – nothing – not a form to be seen, not a face but his and mine. I am obliged to confess that the moment was to me an awful moment. I could not speak. My heart beat wildly as if trying to escape from my breast – every breath I drew was with an effort. I clung to Lecamus with deadly and

helpless terror, and forced myself back upon the wall, crouching against it; I did not turn and fly, as would have been natural. What say I? *did* not! I *could* not! they pressed round us so. Ah! you would think I must be mad to use such words, for there was nobody near me – not a shadow even upon the road.

Lecamus would have gone farther on; he would have pressed his way boldly into the midst; but my courage was not equal to this. I clutched and clung to him, dragging myself along against the wall, my whole mind intent upon getting back. I was stronger than he, and he had no power to resist me. I turned back, stumbling blindly, keeping my face to that crowd (there was no one), but struggling back again, tearing the skin off my hands as I groped my way along the wall. Oh, the agony of seeing the door closed! I have buffeted my way through a crowd before now, but I may say that I never before knew what terror was. When I fell upon the door, dragging Lecamus with me, it opened, thank God! I stumbled in, clutching at Riou with my disengaged hand, and fell upon the floor of the *octroi*, where they thought I had fainted. But this was not the case. A man of resolution may give way to the overpowering sensations of the moment. His bodily faculties may fail him; but his mind will not fail. As in every really superior intelligence, my forces collected for the emergency. While the officers ran to bring me water, to search for the *eau-de-vie* which they had in a cupboard, I astonished them all by rising up, pale, but with full command of myself. 'It is enough,' I said, raising my hand. 'I thank you, Messieurs, but nothing more is necessary;' and I would not take any of their restoratives. They were impressed, as was only natural, by the sight of my perfect self-possession: it helped them to acquire for themselves a demeanour befitting the occasion; and I felt, though still in great physical weakness and agitation, the consoling consciousness of having fulfilled my functions as head of the community.

'M. le Maire has seen a – a – what there is outside?' Riou cried, stammering in his excitement; and the other fixed upon me eyes which were hungering with eagerness – if, indeed, it is permitted to use such words.

'I have seen – nothing, Riou,' I said.

They looked at me with the utmost wonder. 'M. le Maire has seen – nothing?' said Riou. 'Ah, I see! you say so to spare us. We have proved ourselves cowards; but if you will pardon me, M. le Maire, you, too, re-entered precipitately – you too! There are facts which may appal the bravest – but I implore you to tell us what you have seen.'

'I have seen nothing,' I said. As I spoke, my natural calm composure returned, my heart resumed its usual tranquil beating. 'There is nothing to be seen – it is dark, and one can perceive the line of the road for but a little way – that is all. There is nothing to be seen—'

They looked at me, startled and incredulous. They did not know what to think. How could they refuse to believe me, sitting there calmly raising my eyes to them, making my statement with what they felt to be an air of perfect truth? But, then, how account for the precipitate return which they had already noted, the supposed faint, the pallor of my looks? They did not know what to think.

And here, let me remark, as in my conduct throughout these remarkable events, may be seen the benefit, the high advantage, of truth. Had not this been the truth, I could not have borne the searching of their looks. But it was true. There was nothing – nothing to be seen; in one sense, this was the thing of all others which overwhelmed my mind. But why insist upon these matters of detail to unenlightened men? There was nothing, and I had seen nothing. What I said was the truth.

All this time Lecamus had said nothing. As I raised myself from the ground, I had vaguely perceived him hanging up the lantern where it had been before; now he became distinct to me as I recovered the full possession of my faculties. He had seated himself upon a bench by the wall. There was no agitation about him; no sign of the thrill of departing excitement, which I felt going through my veins as through the strings of a harp. He was sitting against the wall, with his head dropping, his eyes cast down, an air of disappointment and despondency about him – nothing more. I got up as soon as I felt that I could go away with perfect propriety; but, before I left the place, called him. He got up when he heard his name, but he did it with reluctance. He came with me because I asked him to do so, not from any wish of his own. Very different were the feelings of Riou and Gallais. They did their utmost to engage me in conversation, to consult me about a hundred trifles, to ask me with the greatest deference what they ought to do in such and such cases, pressing close to me, trying every expedient to delay my departure. When we went away they stood at the door of their little office close together, looking after us with looks which I found it difficult to forget; they would not abandon their post; but their faces were pale and contracted, their eyes wild with anxiety and distress.

It was only as I walked away, hearing my own steps and those of Lecamus ringing upon the pavement, that I began to realise what had happened. The effort of recovering my composure, the relief from the extreme excitement of terror (which, dreadful as the idea is, I am obliged to confess I had actually felt), the sudden influx of life and strength to my brain, had pushed away for the moment the recollection of

what lay outside. When I thought of it again, the blood began once more to course in my veins. Lecamus went on by my side with his head down, the eyelids drooping over his eyes, not saying a word. He followed me when I called him: but cast a regretful look at the postern by which we had gone out, through which I had dragged him back in a panic (I confess it) unworthy of me. Only when we had left at some distance behind us that door into the unseen, did my senses come fully back to me, and I ventured to ask myself what it meant. 'Lecamus,' I said – I could scarcely put my question into words – 'what do you think? what is your idea? – how do you explain—' Even then I am glad to think I had sufficient power of control not to betray all that I felt.

'One does not try to explain,' he said slowly; 'one longs to know – that is all. If M. le Maire had not been – in such haste – had he been willing to go farther – to investigate—'

'God forbid!' I said; and the impulse to quicken my steps, to get home and put myself in safety, was almost more than I could restrain. But I forced myself to go quietly, to measure my steps by his, which were slow and reluctant, as if he dragged himself away with difficulty from that which was behind.

What was it? 'Do not ask, do not ask!' Nature seemed to say in my heart. Thoughts came into my mind in such a dizzy crowd, that the multitude of them seemed to take away my senses. I put up my hands to my ears, in which they seemed to be buzzing and rustling like bees, to stop the sound. When I did so, Lecamus turned and looked at me – grave and wondering. This recalled me to a sense of my weakness. But how I got home I can scarcely say. My mother and wife met me with anxiety. They were greatly disturbed about the Hospital of St Jean, in respect to which it had been recently decided that certain changes should be made. The great ward of the hospital, which was the chief establishment for the sick in the town, had hitherto been so placed in communication with the chapel that mass was heard daily by all the patients – a thing which some had complained of as an annoyance disturbing their rest. So many, indeed, had been the complaints received, that we had come to the conclusion either that the opening should be built up, or the office suspended. Against this decision, it is needless to say, the Sisters of St Jean were moving heaven and earth. Equally unnecessary for me to add, that having so decided in my public capacity, as at once the representative of popular opinion and its guide, the covert reproaches which were breathed in my presence, and even the personal appeals made to me, had failed of any result. I respect the Sisters of St Jean. They are good women and excellent nurses, and the commune owes them much. Still, justice must be impartial; and so long as I retain my position at the head of the community, it is my duty to see that all have their due. My opinions as a private individual, were I allowed to return to that humble position, are entirely a different matter; but this is a thing which ladies, however excellent, are slow to allow or to understand.

I will not pretend that this was to me a night of rest. In the darkness, when all is still, any anxiety which may afflict the soul is apt to gain complete possession and mastery, as all who have had true experience of life will understand. The night was very dark and very still, the clocks striking out the hours which went so slowly, and not another sound audible. The streets of Semur are always quiet, but they were more still than usual that night. Now and then, in a pause of my thoughts, I could hear the soft breathing of my Agnès in the adjoining room, which gave me a little comfort. But this was only by intervals, when I was able to escape from the grasp of the recollections that held me fast. Again I seemed to see under my closed eyelids the faint line of the high road which led from the Porte St Lambert, the broken ground with its ragged bushes on either side, and no one – no one there – not a soul, not a shadow: yet a multitude! When I allowed myself to think of this, my heart leaped into my throat again, my blood ran in my veins like a river in flood. I need not say that I resisted this transport of the nerves with all my might. As the night grew slowly into morning my power of resistance increased; I turned my back, so to speak, upon my recollections, and said to myself, with growing firmness, that all sensations of the body must have their origin in the body. Some derangement of the system – easily explainable, no doubt, if one but held the clue – must have produced the impression which otherwise it would be impossible to explain. As I turned this over and over in my mind, carefully avoiding all temptations to excitement – which is the only wise course in the case of a strong impression on the nerves – I gradually became able to believe that this was the cause. It is one of the penalties, I said to myself, which one has to pay for an organisation more finely tempered than that of the crowd.

This long struggle with myself made the night less tedious, though, perhaps, more terrible; and when at length I was overpowered by sleep, the short interval of unconsciousness restored me like a cordial. I woke in the early morning, feeling almost able to smile at the terrors of the night. When one can assure oneself that the day has really begun, even while it is yet dark, there is a change of sensation, an increase of strength and courage. One by one the dark hours went on. I heard them pealing from the Cathedral clock – four, five, six, seven – all dark, dark. I had got up and dressed before the last, but found no one else awake when I went out – no one stirring in the house, – no one moving in the street. The Cathedral

doors were shut fast, a thing I have never seen before since I remember. Get up early who will, Père Laserques the sacristan is always up still earlier. He is a good old man, and I have often heard him say God's house should be open first of all houses, in case there might be any miserable ones about who had found no shelter in the dwellings of men. But the darkness had cheated even Père Laserques. To see those great doors closed which stood always open gave me a shiver, I cannot well tell why. Had they been open, there was an inclination in my mind to have gone in, though I cannot tell why; for I am not in the habit of attending mass, save on Sunday to set an example. There were no shops open, not a sound about. I went out upon the ramparts to the Mont St Lambert, where the band plays on Sundays. In all the trees there was not so much as the twitter of a bird. I could hear the river flowing swiftly below the wall, but I could not see it, except as something dark, a ravine of gloom below, and beyond the walls I did not venture to look. Why should I look? There was nothing, nothing, as I knew. But fancy is so uncontrollable, and one's nerves so little to be trusted, that it was a wise precaution to refrain. The gloom itself was oppressive enough; the air seemed to creep with apprehensions, and from time to time my heart fluttered with a sick movement, as if it would escape from my control. But everything was still, still as the dead who had been so often in recent days called out of their graves by one or another. 'Enough to bring the dead out of their graves.' What strange words to make use of! It was rather now as if the world had become a grave in which we, though living, were held fast.

Soon after this the dark world began to lighten faintly, and with the rising of a little white mist, like a veil rolling upwards, I at last saw the river and the fields beyond. To see anything at all lightened my heart a little, and I turned homeward when this faint daylight appeared. When I got back into the street, I found that the people at last were stirring. They had all a look of half panic, half shame upon their faces. Many were yawning and stretching themselves. 'Good morning, M. le Maire,' said one and another; 'you are early astir.' 'Not so early either,' I said; and then they added, almost every individual, with a look of shame, 'We were so late this morning; we overslept ourselves – like yesterday. The weather is extraordinary.' This was repeated to me by all kinds of people. They were half frightened, and they were ashamed. Père Laserques was sitting moaning on the Cathedral steps. Such a thing had never happened before. He had not rung the bell for early mass; he had not opened the Cathedral; he had not called M. le Curé. 'I think I must be going out of my senses,' he said; 'but then, M. le Maire, the weather! Did anyone ever see such weather? I think there must be some evil brewing. It is not for nothing that the seasons change – that winter comes in the midst of summer.'

After this I went home. My mother came running to one door when I entered, and my wife to another. '*O mon fils!*' and '*O mon ami!*' they said, rushing upon me. They wept, these dear women. I could not at first prevail upon them to tell me what was the matter. At last they confessed that they believed something to have happened to me, in punishment for the wrong done to the Sisters at the hospital. 'Make haste, my son, to amend this error,' my mother cried, 'lest a worse thing befall us!' And then I discovered that among the women, and among many of the poor people, it had come to be believed that the darkness was a curse upon us for what we had done in respect to the hospital. This roused me to indignation. 'If they think I am to be driven from my duty by their magic,' I cried; 'it is no better than witchcraft!' not that I believed for a moment that it was they who had done it. My wife wept, and my mother became angry with me; but when a thing is duty, it is neither wife nor mother who will move me out of my way.

It was a miserable day. There was not light enough to see anything – scarcely to see each other's faces; and to add to our alarm, some travellers arriving by the diligence (we are still three leagues from a railway, while that miserable little place, La Rochette, being the *chef-lieu*, has a terminus) informed me that the darkness only existed in Semur and the neighbourhood, and that within a distance of three miles the sun was shining. The sun was shining! was it possible? it seemed so long since we had seen the sunshine; but this made our calamity more mysterious and more terrible. The people began to gather into little knots in the streets to talk of the strange thing that was happening. In the course of the day M. Barbou came to ask whether I did not think it would be well to appease the popular feeling by conceding what they wished to the Sisters of the hospital. I would not hear of it. 'Shall we own that we are in the wrong? I do not think we are in the wrong,' I said, and I would not yield. 'Do you think the good Sisters have it in their power to darken the sky with their incantations?' M. l'Adjoint shook his head. He went away with a troubled countenance; but then he was not like myself, a man of natural firmness. All the efforts that were employed to influence him were also employed with me; but to yield to the women was not in my thoughts.

We are now approaching, however, the first important incident in this narrative. The darkness increased as the afternoon came on; and it became a kind of thick twilight, no lighter than many a night. It was between five and six o'clock, just the time when our streets are the most crowded, when, sitting at

my window, from which I kept a watch upon the Grande Rue, not knowing what might happen – I saw that some fresh incident had taken place. Very dimly through the darkness I perceived a crowd, which increased every moment, in front of the Cathedral. After watching it for a few minutes, I got my hat and went out. The people whom I saw – so many that they covered the whole middle of the *Place*, reaching almost to the pavement on the other side – had their heads all turned towards the Cathedral. 'What are you gazing at, my friend?' I said to one by whom I stood. He looked up at me with a face which looked ghastly in the gloom. 'Look, M. le Maire!' he said; 'cannot you see it on the great door?'

'I see nothing,' said I; but as I uttered these words I did indeed see something which was very startling. Looking towards the great door of the Cathedral, as they all were doing, it suddenly seemed to me that I saw an illuminated placard attached to it, headed with the word '*Sommation*' in gigantic letters. *'Tiens!'* I cried; but when I looked again there was nothing. 'What is this? it is some witchcraft!' I said, in spite of myself. 'Do you see anything, Jean Pierre?'

'M. le Maire,' he said, 'one moment one sees something – the next, one sees nothing. Look! it comes again.' I have always considered myself a man of courage, but when I saw this extraordinary appearance the panic which had seized upon me the former night returned, though in another form. Fly I could not, but I will not deny that my knees smote together. I stood for some minutes without being able to articulate a word – which, indeed, seemed the case with most of those before me. Never have I seen a more quiet crowd. They were all gazing, as if it was life or death that was set before them – while I, too, gazed with a shiver going over me. It was as I have seen an illumination of lamps in a stormy night; one moment the whole seems black as the wind sweeps over it, the next it springs into life again; and thus you go on, by turns losing and discovering the device formed by the lights. Thus from moment to moment there appeared before us, in letters that seemed to blaze and flicker, something that looked like a great official placard. '*Sommation!*' – this was how it was headed. I read a few words at a time, as it came and went; and who can describe the chill that ran through my veins as I made it out? It was a summons to the people of Semur by name – myself at the head as Maire (and I heard afterwards that every man who saw it saw his own name, though the whole *façade* of the Cathedral would not have held a full list of all the people of Semur) – to yield their places, which they had not filled aright, to those who knew the meaning of life, being dead. *NOUS AUTRES MORTS* – these were the words which blazed out oftenest of all, so that every one saw them. And 'Go!' this terrible placard said – 'Go! leave this place to us who know the true signification of life.' These words I remember, but not the rest; and even at this moment it struck me that there was no explanation, nothing but this *vraie signification de la vie*. I felt like one in a dream: the light coming and going before me; one word, then another, appearing – sometimes a phrase like that I have quoted, blazing out, then dropping into darkness. For the moment I was struck dumb; but then it came back to my mind that I had an example to give, and that for me, eminently a man of my century, to yield credence to a miracle was something not to be thought of. Also I knew the necessity of doing something to break the impression of awe and terror on the mind of the people. 'This is a trick,' I cried loudly, that all might hear. 'Let some one go and fetch M. de Clairon from the Musée. He will tell us how it has been done.' This, boldly uttered, broke the spell. A number of pale faces gathered round me. 'Here is M. le Maire – he will clear it up,' they cried, making room for me that I might approach nearer. 'M. le Maire is a man of courage – he has judgment. Listen to M. le Maire.' It was a relief to everybody that I had spoken. And soon I found myself by the side of M. le Curé, who was standing among the rest, saying nothing, and with the air of one as much bewildered as any of us. He gave me one quick look from under his eyebrows to see who it was that approached him, as was his way, and made room for me, but said nothing. I was in too much emotion myself to keep silence – indeed, I was in that condition of wonder, alarm, and nervous excitement, that I had to speak or die; and there seemed an escape from something too terrible for flesh and blood to contemplate in the idea that there was trickery here. 'M. le Curé,' I said, 'this is a strange ornament that you have placed on the front of your church. You are standing here to enjoy the effect. Now that you have seen how successful it has been, will not you tell me in confidence how it is done?'

I am conscious that there was a sneer in my voice, but I was too much excited to think of politeness. He gave me another of his rapid, keen looks.

'M. le Maire,' he said, 'you are injurious to a man who is as little fond of tricks as yourself.'

His tone, his glance, gave me a certain sense of shame, but I could not stop myself. 'One knows,' I said, 'that there are many things which an ecclesiastic may do without harm, which are not permitted to an ordinary layman – one who is an honest man, and no more.'

M. le Curé made no reply. He gave me another of his quick glances, with an impatient turn of his head. Why should I have suspected him? for no harm was known of him. He was the Curé, that was all; and perhaps we men of the world have our prejudices too. Afterwards, however, as we waited for M. de

Clairon – for the crisis was too exciting for personal resentment – M. le Curé himself let drop something which made it apparent that it was the ladies of the hospital upon whom his suspicions fell. 'It is never well to offend women, M. le Maire,' he said. 'Women do not discriminate the lawful from the unlawful: so long as they produce an effect, it does not matter to them.' This gave me a strange impression, for it seemed to me that M. le Curé was abandoning his own side. However, all other sentiments were, as may be imagined, but as shadows compared with the overwhelming power that held all our eyes and our thoughts to the wonder before us. Every moment seemed an hour till M. de Clairon appeared. He was pushed forward through the crowd as by magic, all making room for him; and many of us thought that when science thus came forward capable of finding out everything, the miracle would disappear. But instead of this it seemed to glow brighter than ever. That great word '*Sommation*' blazed out, so that we saw his figure waver against the light as if giving way before the flames that scorched him. He was so near that his outline was marked out dark against the glare they gave. It was as though his close approach rekindled every light. Then, with a flicker and trembling, word by word and letter by letter went slowly out before our eyes.

M. de Clairon came down very pale, but with a sort of smile on his face. 'No, M. le Maire,' he said, 'I cannot see how it is done. It is clever. I will examine the door further, and try the panels. Yes, I have left some one to watch that nothing is touched in the meantime, with the permission of M. le Curé—'

'You have my full permission,' M. le Curé said; and M. de Clairon laughed, though he was still very pale. 'You saw my name there,' he said. 'I am amused – I who am not one of your worthy citizens, M. le Maire. What can Messieurs les Morts of Semur want with a poor man of science like me? But you shall have my report before the evening is out.'

With this I had to be content. The darkness which succeeded to that strange light seemed more terrible than ever. We all stumbled as we turned to go away, dazzled by it, and stricken dumb, though some kept saying that it was a trick, and some murmured exclamations with voices full of terror. The sound of the crowd breaking up was like a regiment marching – all the world had been there. I was thankful, however, that neither my mother nor my wife had seen anything; and though they were anxious to know why I was so serious, I succeeded fortunately in keeping the secret from them.

M. de Clairon did not appear till late, and then he confessed to me he could make nothing of it. 'If it is a trick (as of course it must be), it has been most cleverly done,' he said; and admitted that he was baffled altogether. For my part, I was not surprised. Had it been the Sisters of the hospital, as M. le Curé thought, would they have let the opportunity pass of preaching a sermon to us, and recommending their doctrines? Not so; here there were no doctrines, nothing but that pregnant phrase, *la vraie signification de la vie.* This made a more deep impression upon me than anything else. The Holy Mother herself (whom I wish to speak of with profound respect), and the saints, and the forgiveness of sins, would have all been there had it been the Sisters, or even M. le Curé. This, though I had myself suggested an imposture, made very unlikely to my quiet thoughts. But if not an imposture, what could it be supposed to be?

CHAPTER 3

Expulsion of the Inhabitants

I will not attempt to give any detailed account of the state of the town during this evening. For myself I was utterly worn out, and went to rest as soon as M. de Clairon left me, having satisfied, as well as I could, the questions of the women. Even in the intensest excitement weary nature will claim her dues. I slept. I can even remember the grateful sense of being able to put all anxieties and perplexities aside for the moment, as I went to sleep. I felt the drowsiness gain upon me, and I was glad. To forget was of itself a happiness.

I woke up, however, intensely awake, and in perfect possession of all my faculties, while it was yet dark; and at once got up and began to dress. The moment of hesitation which generally follows waking – the little interval of thought in which one turns over perhaps that which is past, perhaps that which is to come – found no place within me. I got up without a moment's pause, like one who has been called to go on a journey; nor did it surprise me at all to see my wife moving about, taking a cloak from her wardrobe, and putting up linen in a bag. She was already fully dressed; but she asked no questions of me any more than I did of her. We were in haste, though we said nothing. When I had dressed, I looked round me to see if I had forgotten anything, as one does when one leaves a place. I saw my watch suspended to its usual hook, and my pocket-book, which I had taken from my pocket on the previous night. I took up also the light overcoat which I had worn when I made my rounds through the city on the first night of the darkness. 'Now,' I said, 'Agnès, I am ready.' I did not speak to her of where we were going, nor she to me. Little Jean and my mother met us at the door. Nor did *she* say anything, contrary to her custom; and the child was quite quiet. We went downstairs together without saying a word. The servants, who were all astir, followed us. I cannot give any description of the feelings that were in my mind. I had not any feelings. I was only hurried out, hastened by something which I could not define – a sense that I must go; and perhaps I was too much astonished to do anything but yield. It seemed, however, to be no force or fear that was moving me, but a desire of my own; though I could not tell how it was, or why I should be so anxious to get away. All the servants, trooping after me, had the same look in their faces; they were anxious to be gone – it seemed their business to go – there was no question, no consultation. And when we came out into the street, we encountered a stream of processions similar to our own. The children went quite steadily by the side of their parents. Little Jean, for example, on an ordinary occasion would have broken away – would have run to his comrades of the Bois-Sombre family, and they to him. But no; the little ones, like ourselves, walked along quite gravely. They asked no questions, neither did we ask any questions of each other, as, 'Where are you going?' or, 'What is the meaning of a so-early promenade?' Nothing of the kind: my mother took my arm, and my wife, leading little Jean by the hand, came to the other side. The servants followed. The street was quite full of people; but there was no noise except the sound of their footsteps. All of us turned the same way – turned towards the gates – and though I was not conscious of any feeling except the wish to go on, there were one or two things which took a place in my memory. The first was, that my wife suddenly turned round as we were coming out of the *porte-cochère*, her face lighting up. I need not say to any one who knows Madame Dupin de la Clairière, that she is a beautiful woman. Without any partiality on my part, it would be impossible for me to ignore this fact: for it is perfectly well known and acknowledged by all. She was pale this morning – a little paler than usual; and her blue eyes enlarged, with a serious look, which they always retain more or less. But suddenly, as we went out of the door, her face lighted up, her eyes were suffused with tears – with light – how can I tell what it was? – they became like the eyes of angels. A little cry came from her parted lips – she lingered a moment, stooping down as if talking to some one less tall than herself, then came after us, with that light still in her face. At the moment I was too much occupied to enquire what it was; but I noted it, even in the gravity of the occasion. The next thing I observed was M. le Curé, who, as I have already indicated, is a man of great composure of manner and

presence of mind, coming out of the door of the Presbytery. There was a strange look on his face of astonishment and reluctance. He walked very slowly, not as we did, but with a visible desire to turn back, folding his arms across his breast, and holding himself as if against the wind, resisting some gale which blew behind him, and forced him on. We felt no gale; but there seemed to be a strange wind blowing along the side of the street on which M. le Curé was. And there was an air of concealed surprise in his face – great astonishment, but a determination not to let any one see that he was astonished, or that the situation was strange to him. And I cannot tell how it was, but I, too, though pre-occupied, was surprised to perceive that M. le Curé was going with the rest of us, though I could not have told why.

Behind M. le Curé there was another whom I remarked. This was Jacques Richard, he of whom I have already spoken. He was like a figure I have seen somewhere in sculpture. No one was near him, nobody touching him, and yet it was only necessary to look at the man to perceive that he was being forced along against his will. Every limb was in resistance; his feet were planted widely yet firmly upon the pavement; one of his arms was stretched out as if to lay hold on anything that should come within reach. M. le Curé resisted passively; but Jacques resisted with passion, laying his back to the wind, and struggling not to be carried away. Notwithstanding his resistance, however, this rough figure was driven along slowly, struggling at every step. He did not make one movement that was not against his will, but still he was driven on. On our side of the street all went, like ourselves, calmly. My mother uttered now and then a low moan, but said nothing. She clung to my arm, and walked on, hurrying a little, sometimes going quicker than I intended to go. As for my wife, she accompanied us with her light step, which scarcely seemed to touch the ground, little Jean pattering by her side. Our neighbours were all round us. We streamed down, as in a long procession, to the Porte St Lambert. It was only when we got there that the strange character of the step we were all taking suddenly occurred to me. It was still a kind of grey twilight, not yet day. The bells of the Cathedral had begun to toll, which was very startling – not ringing in their cheerful way, but tolling as if for a funeral, and no other sound was audible but the noise of footsteps, like an army making a silent march into an enemy's country. We had reached the gate when a sudden wondering came over me. Why were we all going out of our houses in the wintry dusk to which our July days had turned? I stopped, and turning round, was about to say something to the others, when I became suddenly aware that here I was not my own master. My tongue clave to the roof of my mouth; I could not say a word. Then I myself was turned round, and softly, firmly, irresistibly pushed out of the gate. My mother, who clung to me, added a little, no doubt, to the force against me, whatever it was, for she was frightened, and opposed herself to any endeavour on my part to regain freedom of movement; but all that her feeble force could do against mine must have been little. Several other men around me seemed to be moved as I was. M. Barbou, for one, made a still more decided effort to turn back, for, being a bachelor, he had no one to restrain him. Him I saw turned round as you would turn a *roulette*. He was thrown against my wife in his tempestuous course, and but that she was so light and elastic in her tread, gliding out straight and softly like one of the saints, I think he must have thrown her down. And at that moment, silent as we all were, his '*Pardon, Madame, mille pardons, Madame*,' and his tone of horror at his own indiscretion, seemed to come to me like a voice out of another life. Partially roused before by the sudden impulse of resistance I have described, I was yet more roused now. I turned round, disengaging myself from my mother. 'Where are we going? why are we thus cast forth? My friends, help!' I cried. I looked round upon the others, who, as I have said, had also awakened to a possibility of resistance. M. de Bois-Sombre, without a word, came and placed himself by my side; others started from the crowd. We turned to resist this mysterious impulse which had sent us forth. The crowd surged round us in the uncertain light.

Just then there was a dull soft sound, once, twice, thrice repeated. We rushed forward, but too late. The gates were closed upon us. The two folds of the great Porte St Lambert, and the little postern for foot-passengers, all at once, not hurriedly, as from any fear of us, but slowly, softly, rolled on their hinges and shut – in our faces. I rushed forward with all my force and flung myself upon the gate. To what use? it was so closed as no mortal could open it. They told me after, for I was not aware at the moment, that I burst forth with cries and exclamations, bidding them 'Open, open in the name of God!' I was not aware of what I said, but it seemed to me that I heard a voice of which nobody said anything to me, so that it would seem to have been unheard by the others, saying with a faint sound as of a trumpet, 'Closed – in the name of God.' It might be only an echo, faintly brought back to me, of the words I had myself said.

There was another change, however, of which no one could have any doubt. When I turned round from these closed doors, though the moment before the darkness was such that we could not see the gates closing, I found the sun shining gloriously round us, and all my fellow-citizens turning with one impulse, with a sudden cry of joy, to hail the full day.

Le grand jour! Never in my life did I feel the full happiness of it, the full sense of the words before. The

sun burst out into shining, the birds into singing. The sky stretched over us – deep and unfathomable and blue, – the grass grew under our feet, a soft air of morning blew upon us, waving the curls of the children, the veils of the women, whose faces were lit up by the beautiful day. After three days of darkness what a resurrection! It seemed to make up to us for the misery of being thus expelled from our homes. It was early, and all the freshness of the morning was upon the road and the fields, where the sun had just dried the dew. The river ran softly, reflecting the blue sky. How black it had been, deep and dark as a stream of ink, when I had looked down upon it from the Mont St Lambert! and now it ran as clear and free as the voice of a little child. We all shared this moment of joy – for to us of the South the sunshine is as the breath of life, and to be deprived of it had been terrible. But when that first pleasure was over, the evidence of our strange position forced itself upon us with overpowering reality and force, made stronger by the very light. In the dimness it had not seemed so certain; now, gazing at each other in the clear light of the natural morning, we saw what had happened to us. No more delusion was possible. We could not flatter ourselves now that it was a trick or a deception. M. de Clairon stood there like the rest of us, staring at the closed gates which science could not open. And there stood M. le Curé, which was more remarkable still. The Church herself had not been able to do anything. We stood, a crowd of houseless exiles, looking at each other, our children clinging to us, our hearts failing us, expelled from our homes. As we looked in each other's faces we saw our own trouble. Many of the women sat down and wept; some upon the stones in the road, some on the grass. The children took fright from them, and began to cry too. What was to become of us? I looked round upon this crowd with despair in my heart. It was I to whom every one would look – for lodging, for direction – everything that human creatures want. It was my business to forget myself, though I also had been driven from my home and my city. Happily there was one thing I had left. In the pocket of my overcoat was my scarf of office. I stepped aside behind a tree, and took it out, and tied it upon me. That was something. There was thus a representative of order and law in the midst of the exiles, whatever might happen. This action, which a great number of the crowd saw, restored confidence. Many of the poor people gathered round me, and placed themselves near me, especially those women who had no natural support. When M. le Curé saw this, it seemed to make a great impression upon him. He changed colour, he who was usually so calm. Hitherto he had appeared bewildered, amazed to find himself as others. This, I must add, though you may perhaps think it superstitious, surprised me very much too. But now he regained his self-possession. He stepped upon a piece of wood that lay in front of the gate. 'My children—' he said. But just then the Cathedral bells, which had gone on tolling, suddenly burst into a wild peal. I do not know what it sounded like. It was a clamour of notes all run together, tone upon tone, without time or measure, as though a multitude had seized upon the bells and pulled all the ropes at once. If it was joy, what strange and terrible joy! It froze the very blood in our veins. M. le Curé became quite pale. He stepped down hurriedly from the piece of wood. We all made a hurried movement farther off from the gate.

It was now that I perceived the necessity of doing something, of getting this crowd disposed of, especially the women and the children. I am not ashamed to own that I trembled like the others; and nothing less than the consciousness that all eyes were upon me, and that my scarf of office marked me out among all who stood around, could have kept me from moving with precipitation as they did. I was enabled, however, to retire at a deliberate pace, and being thus slightly detached from the crowd, I took advantage of the opportunity to address them. Above all things, it was my duty to prevent a tumult in these unprecedented circumstances. 'My friends,' I said, 'the event which has occurred is beyond explanation for the moment. The very nature of it is mysterious; the circumstances are such as require the closest investigation. But take courage. I pledge myself not to leave this place till the gates are open, and you can return to your homes; in the meantime, however, the women and the children cannot remain here. Let those who have friends in the villages near, go and ask for shelter; and let all who will, go to my house of La Clairière. My mother, my wife! recall to yourselves the position you occupy, and show an example. Lead our neighbours, I entreat you, to La Clairière.'

My mother is advanced in years and no longer strong, but she has a great heart. 'I will go,' she said. 'God bless thee, my son! There will no harm happen; for if this be true which we are told, thy father is in Semur.'

There then occurred one of those incidents for which calculation never will prepare us. My mother's words seemed, as it were to open the floodgates; my wife came up to me with the light in her face which I had seen when we left our own door. 'It was our little Marie – our angel,' she said. And then there arose a great cry and clamour of others, both men and women pressing round. 'I saw my mother,' said one, 'who is dead twenty years come the St Jean.' 'And I my little René,' said another. 'And I my Camille, who was killed in Africa.' And lo, what did they do, but rush towards the gate in a crowd – that gate from which they had but this moment fled in terror – beating upon it, and crying out, 'Open to us, open to us,

our most dear! Do you think we have forgotten you? We have never forgotten you!' What could we do with them, weeping thus, smiling, holding out their arms to – we knew not what? Even my Agnès was beyond my reach. Marie was our little girl who was dead. Those who were thus transported by a knowledge beyond ours were the weakest among us; most of them were women, the men old or feeble, and some children. I can recollect that I looked for Paul Lecamus among them, with wonder not to see him there. But though they were weak, they were beyond our strength to guide. What could we do with them? How could we force them away while they held to the fancy that those they loved were there? As it happens in times of emotion, it was those who were most impassioned who took the first place. We were at our wits' end.

But while we stood waiting, not knowing what to do, another sound suddenly came from the walls, which made them all silent in a moment. The most of us ran to this point and that (some taking flight altogether; but with the greater part anxious curiosity and anxiety had for the moment extinguished fear), in a wild eagerness to see who or what it was. But there was nothing to be seen, though the sound came from the wall close to the Mont St Lambert, which I have already described. It was to me like the sound of a trumpet, and so I heard others say; and along with the trumpet were sounds as of words, though I could not make them out. But those others seemed to understand – they grew calmer – they ceased to weep. They raised their faces, all with that light upon them – that light I had seen in my Agnès. Some of them fell upon their knees. Imagine to yourself what a sight it was, all of us standing round, pale, stupefied, without a word to say! Then the women suddenly burst forth into replies – '*Oui, ma chérie! Oui, mon ange!*' they cried. And while we looked they rose up; they came back, calling the children around them. My Agnès took that place which I had bidden her take. She had not hearkened to me, to leave me – but she hearkened now; and though I had bidden her to do this, yet to see her do it bewildered me, made my heart stand still. '*Mon ami*,' she said, 'I must leave thee; it is commanded: they will not have the children suffer.' What could we do? We stood pale and looked on, while all the little ones, all the feeble, were gathered in a little army. My mother stood like me – to her nothing had been revealed. She was very pale, and there was a quiver of pain in her lips. She was the one who had been ready to do my bidding: but there was a rebellion in her heart now. When the procession was formed (for it was my care to see that everything was done in order), she followed, but among the last. Thus they went away, many of them weeping, looking back, waving their hands to us. My Agnès covered her face, she could not look at me; but she obeyed. They went some to this side, some to that, leaving us gazing. For a long time we did nothing but watch them, going along the roads. What had their angels said to them? Nay, but God knows. I heard the sound; it was like the sound of the silver trumpets that travellers talk of; it was like music from heaven. I turned to M. le Curé, who was standing by. 'What is it?' I cried, 'you are their director – you are an ecclesiastic – you know what belongs to the unseen. What is this that has been said to them?' I have always thought well of M. le Curé. There were tears running down his cheeks. 'I know not,' he said. 'I am a miserable like the rest. What they know is between God and them. Me! I have been of the world, like the rest.'

This is how we were left alone – the men of the city – to take what means were best to get back to our homes. There were several left among us who had shared the enlightenment of the women, but these were not persons of importance who could put themselves at the head of affairs. And there were women who remained with us, but these not of the best. To see our wives go was very strange to us; it was the thing we wished most to see, the women and children in safety; yet it was a strange sensation to see them go. For me, who had the charge of all on my hands, the relief was beyond description – yet was it strange; I cannot describe it. Then I called upon M. Barbou, who was trembling like a leaf, and gathered the chief of the citizens about me, including M. le Curé, that we should consult together what we should do.

I know no words that can describe our state in the strange circumstances we were now placed in. The women and the children were safe; that was much. But we – we were like an army suddenly formed, but without arms, without any knowledge of how to fight, without being able to see our enemy. We Frenchmen have not been without knowledge of such perils. We have seen the invader enter our doors; we have been obliged to spread our table for him, and give him of our best. But to be put forth by forces no man could resist – to be left outside, with the doors of our own houses closed upon us – to be confronted by nothing – by a mist, a silence, a darkness, – this was enough to paralyse the heart of any man. And it did so, more or less, according to the nature of those who were exposed to the trial. Some altogether failed us, and fled, carrying the news into the country, where most people laughed at them, as we understood afterwards. Some could do nothing but sit and gaze, huddled together in crowds, at the cloud over Semur, from which they expected to see fire burst and consume the city altogether. And a few, I grieve to say, took possession of the little *cabaret*, which stands at about half a kilometre from the St

Lambert gate, and established themselves there, in hideous riot, which was the worst thing of all for serious men to behold. Those upon whom I could rely I formed into patrols to go round the city, that no opening of a gate, or movement of those who were within, should take place without our knowledge. Such an emergency shows what men are. M. Barbou, though in ordinary times he discharges his duties as *adjoint* satisfactorily enough (though, it need not be added, a good Maire who is acquainted with his duties, makes the office of *adjoint* of but little importance), was now found entirely useless. He could not forget how he had been spun round and tossed forth from the city gates. When I proposed to put him at the head of a patrol, he had an attack of the nerves. Before nightfall he deserted me altogether, going off to his country-house, and taking a number of his neighbours with him. 'How can we tell when we may be permitted to return to the town?' he said, with his teeth chattering. 'M. le Maire, I adjure you to put yourself in a place of safety.'

'Sir,' I said to him, sternly, 'for one who deserts his post there is no place of safety.'

But I do not think he was capable of understanding me. Fortunately, I found in M. le Curé a much more trustworthy coadjutor. He was indefatigable; he had the habit of sitting up to all hours, of being called at all hours, in which our *bourgeoisie*, I cannot but acknowledge, is wanting. The expression I have before described of astonishment – but of astonishment which he wished to conceal – never left his face. He did not understand how such a thing could have been permitted to happen while he had no share in it; and, indeed, I will not deny that this was a matter of great wonder to myself too.

The arrangements I have described gave us occupation; and this had a happy effect upon us in distracting our minds from what had happened; for I think that if we had sat still and gazed at the dark city we should soon have gone mad, as some did. In our ceaseless patrols and attempts to find a way of entrance, we distracted ourselves from the enquiry, Who would dare to go in if the entrance were found? In the meantime not a gate was opened, not a figure was visible. We saw nothing, no more than if Semur had been a picture painted upon a canvas. Strange sights indeed met our eyes – sights which made even the bravest quail. The strangest of them was the boats that would go down and up the river, shooting forth from under the fortified bridge, which is one of the chief features of our town, sometimes with sails perfectly well managed, sometimes impelled by oars, but with no one visible in them – no one conducting them. To see one of these boats impelled up the stream, with no rower visible, was a wonderful sight. M. de Clairon, who was by my side, murmured something about a magnetic current; but when I asked him sternly by what set in motion, his voice died away in his moustache. M. le Curé said very little: one saw his lips move as he watched with us the passage of those boats. He smiled when it was proposed by some one to fire upon them. He read his Hours as he went round at the head of his patrol. My fellow townsmen and I conceived a great respect for him; and he inspired pity in me also. He had been the teacher of the Unseen among us, till the moment when the Unseen was thus, as it were, brought within our reach; but with the revelation he had nothing to do; and it filled him with pain and wonder. It made him silent; he said little about his religion, but signed himself, and his lips moved. He thought (I imagine) that he had displeased Those who are over all.

When night came the bravest of us were afraid. I speak for myself. It was bright moonlight where we were, and Semur lay like a blot between the earth and the sky, all dark: even the Cathedral towers were lost in it; nothing visible but the line of the ramparts, whitened outside by the moon. One knows what black and strange shadows are cast by the moonlight; and it seemed to all of us that we did not know what might be lurking behind every tree. The shadows of the branches looked like terrible faces. I sent all my people out on the patrols, though they were dropping with fatigue. Rather that than to be mad with terror. For myself, I took up my post as near the bank of the river as we could approach; for there was a limit beyond which we might not pass. I made the experiment often; and it seemed to me, and to all that attempted it, that we did reach the very edge of the stream; but the next moment perceived that we were at a certain distance, say twenty metres or thereabout. I placed myself there very often, wrapping a cloak about me to preserve me from the dew. (I may say that food had been sent us, and wine from La Clairière and many other houses in the neighbourhood, where the women had gone for this among other reasons, that we might be nourished by them.) And I must here relate a personal incident, though I have endeavoured not to be egotistical. While I sat watching, I distinctly saw a boat, a boat which belonged to myself, lying on the very edge of the shadow. The prow, indeed, touched the moonlight where it was cut clean across by the darkness; and this was how I discovered that it was the *Marie,* a pretty pleasure-boat which had been made for my wife. The sight of it made my heart beat; for what could it mean but that some one who was dear to me, some one in whom I took an interest, was there? I sprang up from where I sat to make another effort to get nearer; but my feet were as lead, and would not move; and there came a singing in my ears, and my blood coursed through my veins as in a fever. Ah! was it possible? I, who am a man, who have resolution, who have courage, who can lead the people, *I was afraid!* I sat down again

and wept like a child. Perhaps it was my little Marie that was in the boat. God, He knows if I loved thee, my little angel! but I was afraid. O how mean is man! though we are so proud. They came near to me who were my own, and it was borne in upon my spirit that my good father was with the child; but because they had died I was afraid. I covered my face with my hands. Then it seemed to me that I heard a long quiver of a sigh; a long, long breath, such as sometimes relieves a sorrow that is beyond words. Trembling, I uncovered my eyes. There was nothing on the edge of the moonlight; all was dark, and all was still, the white radiance making a clear line across the river, but nothing more.

If my Agnès had been with me she would have seen our child, she would have heard that voice! The great cold drops of moisture were on my forehead. My limbs trembled, my heart fluttered in my bosom. I could neither listen nor yet speak. And those who would have spoken to me, those who loved me, sighing, went away. It is not possible that such wretchedness should be credible to noble minds; and if it had not been for pride and for shame, I should have fled away straight to La Clairière, to put myself under shelter, to have some one near me who was less a coward than I. I, upon whom all the others relied, the Maire of the Commune! I make my confession. I was of no more force than this.

A voice behind me made me spring to my feet – the leap of a mouse would have driven me wild. I was altogether demoralised. 'Monsieur le Maire, it is but I,' said some one quite humble and frightened. '*Tiens!* – it is thou, Jacques!' I said. I could have embraced him, though it is well known how little I approve of him. But he was living, he was a man like myself. I put out my hand, and felt him warm and breathing, and I shall never forget the ease that came to my heart. Its beating calmed, I was restored to myself.

'M. le Maire,' he said, 'I wish to ask you something. Is it true all that is said about these people, I would say, these Messieurs? I do not wish to speak with disrespect, M. le Maire.'

'What is it, Jacques, that is said?' I had called him 'thou' not out of contempt, but because, for the moment, he seemed to me as a brother, as one of my friends.

'M. le Maire, is it indeed *les morts* that are in Semur?'

He trembled, and so did I. 'Jacques,' I said, 'you know all that I know.'

'Yes, M. le Maire, it is so, sure enough. I do not doubt it. If it were the Prussians, a man could fight. But *ces Messieurs là!* What I want to know is: is it because of what you did to those little Sisters, those good little ladies of St Jean?'

'What I did? You were yourself one of the complainants. You were of those who said, when a man is ill, when he is suffering, they torment him with their mass; it is quiet he wants, not their mass. These were thy words, *vaurien.* And now you say it was I!'

'True, M. le Maire,' said Jacques; 'but look you, when a man is better, when he has just got well, when he feels he is safe, then you should not take what he says for gospel. It would be strange if one had a new illness just when one is getting well of the old; and one feels now is the time to enjoy one's self, to kick up one's heels a little, while at least there is not likely to be much of a watch kept *up there* – the saints forgive me,' cried Jacques, trembling and crossing himself, 'if I speak with levity at such a moment! And the little ladies were very kind. It was wrong to close their chapel, M. le Maire. From that comes all our trouble.'

'You good-for-nothing!' I cried, 'it is you and such as you that are the beginning of our trouble. You thought there was no watch kept *up there*; you thought God would not take the trouble to punish you; you went about the streets of Semur tossing a *grosse pièce* of a hundred sous, and calling out, "There is no God – this is my god; *l'argent, c'est le bon Dieu.*"'

'M. le Maire, M. le Maire, be silent, I implore you! It is enough to bring down a judgment upon us.'

'It has brought down a judgment upon us. Go thou and try what thy *grosse pièce* will do for thee now – worship thy god. Go, I tell you, and get help from your money.'

'I have no money, M. le Maire, and what could money do here? We would do much better to promise a large candle for the next festival, and that the ladies of St Jean—'

'Get away with thee to the end of the world, thou and thy ladies of St Jean!' I cried; which was wrong, I do not deny it, for they are good women, not like this good-for-nothing fellow. And to think that this man, whom I despise, was more pleasant to me than the dear souls who loved me! Shame came upon me at the thought. I too, then, was like the others, fearing the Unseen – capable of understanding only that which was palpable. When Jacques slunk away, which he did for a few steps, not losing sight of me, I turned my face towards the river and the town. The moonlight fell upon the water, white as silver where that line of darkness lay, shining, as if it tried, and tried in vain, to penetrate Semur; and between that and the blue sky overhead lay the city out of which we had been driven forth – the city of the dead. 'O God,' I cried, 'whom I know not, am not I to Thee as my little Jean is to me, a child and less than a child? Do not abandon me in this darkness. Would I abandon him were he ever so disobedient? And God, if thou art God, Thou art a better father than I.' When I had said this, my heart was a little relieved. It seemed to

me that I had spoken to some one who knew all of us, whether we were dead or whether we were living. That is a wonderful thing to think of, when it appears to one not as a thing to believe, but as something that is real. It gave me courage. I got up and went to meet the patrol which was coming in, and found that great good-for-nothing Jacques running close after me, holding my cloak. 'Do not send me away, M. le Maire,' he said, 'I dare not stay by myself with *them* so near.' Instead of his money, in which he had trusted, it was I who had become his god now.

CHAPTER 4

Outside the Walls

There are few who have not heard something of the sufferings of a siege. Whether within or without, it is the most terrible of all the experiences of war. I am old enough to recollect the trenches before Sebastopol, and all that my countrymen and the English endured there. Sometimes I endeavoured to think of this to distract me from what we ourselves endured. But how different was it! We had neither shelter nor support. We had no weapons, nor any against whom to wield them. We were cast out of our homes in the midst of our lives, in the midst of our occupations, and left there helpless, to gaze at each other, to blind our eyes trying to penetrate the darkness before us. Could we have done anything, the oppression might have been less terrible – but what was there that we could do? Fortunately (though I do not deny that I felt each desertion) our band grew less and less every day. Hour by hour some one stole away – first one, then another, dispersing themselves among the villages near, in which many had friends. The accounts which these men gave were, I afterwards learnt, of the most vague description. Some talked of wonders they had seen, and were laughed at – and some spread reports of internal division among us. Not till long after did I know all the reports that went abroad. It was said that there had been fighting in Semur, and that we were divided into two factions, one of which had gained the mastery, and driven the other out. This was the story current in La Rochette, where they are always glad to hear anything to the discredit of the people of Semur; but no credence could have been given to it by those in authority, otherwise M. le Préfet, however indifferent to our interests, must necessarily have taken some steps for our relief. Our entire separation from the world was indeed one of the strangest details of this terrible period. Generally the diligence, though conveying on the whole few passengers, returned with two or three, at least, visitors or commercial persons, daily – and the latter class frequently arrived in carriages of their own; but during this period no stranger came to see our miserable plight. We made shelter for ourselves under the branches of the few trees that grew in the uncultivated ground on either side of the road – and a hasty erection, half tent half shed, was put up for a place to assemble in, or for those who were unable to bear the heat of the day or the occasional chills of the night. But the most of us were too restless to seek repose, and could not bear to be out of sight of the city. At any moment it seemed to us the gates might open, or some loophole be visible by which we might throw ourselves upon the darkness and vanquish it. This was what we said to ourselves, forgetting how we shook and trembled whenever any contact had been possible with those who were within. But one thing was certain, that though we feared, we could not turn our eyes from the place. We slept leaning against a tree, or with our heads on our hands, and our faces toward Semur. We took no count of day or night, but ate the morsel the women brought to us, and slept thus, not sleeping, when want or weariness overwhelmed us. There was scarcely an hour in the day that some of the women did not come to ask what news. They crept along the roads in twos and threes, and lingered for hours sitting by the way weeping, starting at every breath of wind.

Meanwhile all was not silent within Semur. The Cathedral bells rang often, at first filling us with hope, for how familiar was that sound! The first time, we all gathered together and listened, and many wept. It was as if we heard our mother's voice. M. de Bois-Sombre burst into tears. I have never seen him within the doors of the Cathedral since his marriage; but he burst into tears. '*Mon Dieu!* if I were but there!' he said. We stood and listened, our hearts melting, some falling on their knees. M. le Curé stood up in the midst of us and began to intone the psalm: (He has a beautiful voice. It is sympathetic, it goes to the heart.) 'I was glad when they said to me, Let us go up—' And though there were few of us who could have supposed themselves capable of listening to that sentiment a little while before with any sympathy, yet a vague hope rose up within us while we heard him, while we listened to the bells. What man is there to whom the bells of his village, the *carillon* of his city, is not most dear? It rings for him through all his life; it is the first sound of home in the distance when he comes back – the last that follows him like a

long farewell when he goes away. While we listened, we forgot our fears. They were as we were, they were also our brethren, who rang those bells. We seemed to see them trooping into our beautiful Cathedral. Ah! only to see it again, to be within its shelter, cool and calm as in our mothers' arms! It seemed to us that we should wish for nothing more.

When the sound ceased we looked into each other's faces, and each man saw that his neighbour was pale. Hope died in us when the sound died away, vibrating sadly through the air. Some men threw themselves on the ground in their despair.

And from this time forward many voices were heard, calls and shouts within the walls, and sometimes a sound like a trumpet, and other instruments of music. We thought, indeed, that noises as of bands patrolling along the ramparts were audible as our patrols worked their way round and round. This was a duty which I never allowed to be neglected, not because I put very much faith in it, but because it gave us a sort of employment. There is a story somewhere which I recollect dimly of an ancient city which its assailants did not touch, but only marched round and round till the walls fell, and they could enter. Whether this was a story of classic times or out of our own remote history, I could not recollect. But I thought of it many times while we made our way like a procession of ghosts, round and round, straining our ears to hear what those voices were which sounded above us, in tones that were familiar, yet so strange. This story got so much into my head (and after a time all our heads seemed to get confused and full of wild and bewildering expedients) that I found myself suggesting – I, a man known for sense and reason – that we should blow trumpets at some time to be fixed, which was a thing the ancients had done in the strange tale which had taken possession of me. M. le Curé looked at me with disapproval. He said, 'I did not expect from M. le Maire anything that was disrespectful to religion.' Heaven forbid that I should be disrespectful to religion at any time of life, but then it was impossible to me. I remembered after that the tale of which I speak, which had so seized upon me, was in the sacred writings; but those who know me will understand that no sneer at these writings or intention of wounding the feelings of M. le Curé was in my mind.

I was seated one day upon a little inequality of the ground, leaning my back against a half-withered hawthorn, and dozing with my head in my hands, when a soothing, which always diffuses itself from her presence, shed itself over me, and opening my eyes, I saw my Agnès sitting by me. She had come with some food and a little linen, fresh and soft like her own touch. My wife was not gaunt and worn like me, but she was pale and as thin as a shadow. I woke with a start, and seeing her there, there suddenly came a dread over me that she would pass away before my eyes, and go over to Those who were within Semur. I cried '*Non, mon Agnès; non, mon Agnès:* before you ask, No!' seizing her and holding her fast in this dream, which was not altogether a dream. She looked at me with a smile, that has always been to me as the rising of the sun over the earth.

'*Mon ami*,' she said surprised, 'I ask nothing, except that you should take a little rest and spare thyself.' Then she added, with haste, what I knew she would say, 'Unless it were this, *mon ami.* If I were permitted, I would go into the city – I would ask those who are there, what is their meaning: and if no way can be found – no act of penitence. – Oh! do not answer in haste! I have no fear; and it would be to save thee.'

A strong throb of anger came into my throat. Figure to yourself that I looked at my wife with anger, with the same feeling which had moved me when the deserters left us; but far more hot and sharp. I seized her soft hands and crushed them in mine. 'You would leave me!' I said. 'You would desert your husband. You would go over to our enemies!'

'O Martin, say not so,' she cried, with tears. 'Not enemies. There is our little Marie, and my mother, who died when I was born.'

'You love these dead tyrants. Yes,' I said, 'you love them best. You will go to – the majority, to the strongest. Do not speak to me! Because your God is on their side, you will forsake us too.'

Then she threw herself upon me and encircled me with her arms. The touch of them stilled my passion; but yet I held her, clutching her gown, so terrible a fear came over me that she would go and come back no more.

'Forsake thee!' she breathed out over me with a moan. Then, putting her cool cheek to mine, which burned, 'But I would die for thee, Martin.'

'Silence, my wife: that is what you shall not do,' I cried, beside myself. I rose up; I put her away from me. That is, I know it, what has been done. Their God does this, they do not hesitate to say – takes from you what you love best, to make you better – *you!* and they ask you to love Him when He has thus despoiled you! 'Go home, Agnès,' I said, hoarse with terror. 'Let us face them as we may; you shall not go among them, or put thyself in peril. Die for me! *Mon Dieu!* and what then, what should I do then? Turn your face from them; turn from them; go! go! and let me not see thee here again.'

My wife did not understand the terror that seized me. She obeyed me, as she always does, but, with the tears falling from her white cheeks, fixed upon me the most piteous look. '*Mon ami*,' she said, 'you are disturbed, you are not in possession of yourself; this cannot be what you mean.'

'Let me not see thee here again!' I cried. 'Would you make me mad in the midst of my trouble? No! I will not have you look that way. Go home! go home!' Then I took her into my arms and wept, though I am not a man given to tears. 'Oh! my Agnès,' I said, 'give me thy counsel. What you tell me I will do; but rather than risk thee, I would live thus for ever, and defy them.'

She put her hand upon my lips. 'I will not ask this again,' she said, bowing her head; 'but defy them – why should you defy them? Have they come for nothing? Was Semur a city of the saints? They have come to convert our people, Martin – thee too, and the rest. If you will submit your hearts, they will open the gates, they will go back to their sacred homes: and we to ours. This has been borne in upon me sleeping and waking; and it seemed to me that if I could but go, and say, "Oh! my fathers, oh! my brothers, they submit," all would be well. For I do not fear them, Martin. Would they harm me that love us? I would but give our Marie one kiss—'

'You are a traitor!' I said. 'You would steal yourself from me, and do me the worst wrong of all—'

But I recovered my calm. What she said reached my understanding at last. 'Submit!' I said, 'but to what? To come and turn us from our homes, to wrap our town in darkness, to banish our wives and our children, to leave us here to be scorched by the sun and drenched by the rain, – this is not to convince us, my Agnès. And to what then do you bid us submit—?'

'It is to convince you, *mon ami*, of the love of God, who has permitted this great tribulation to be, that we might be saved,' said Agnès. Her face was sublime with faith. It is possible to these dear women; but for me the words she spoke were but words without meaning. I shook my head. Now that my horror and alarm were passed, I could well remember often to have heard words like these before.

'My angel!' I said, 'all this I admire, I adore in thee; but how is it the love of God? – and how shall we be saved by it? Submit! I will do anything that is reasonable; but of what truth have we here the proof —?'

Some one had come up behind as we were talking. When I heard his voice I smiled notwithstanding my despair. It was natural that the Church should come to the woman's aid. But I would not refuse to give ear to M. le Curé, who had proved himself a man, had he been ten times a priest.

'I have not heard what Madame has been saying, M. le Maire, neither would I interpose but for your question. You ask of what truth have we the proof here? It is the Unseen that has revealed itself. Do we see anything, you and I! Nothing, nothing, but a cloud. But that which we cannot see, that which we know not, that which we dread – look! it is there.'

I turned unconsciously as he pointed with his hand. Oh, heaven, what did I see! Above the cloud that wrapped Semur there was a separation, a rent in the darkness, and in mid heaven the Cathedral towers, pointing to the sky. I paid no more attention to M. le Curé. I sent forth a shout that roused all, even the weary line of the patrol that was marching slowly with bowed heads round the walls; and there went up such a cry of joy as shook the earth. 'The towers, the towers!' I cried. These were the towers that could be seen leagues off, the first sign of Semur; our towers, which we had been born to love like our father's name. I have had joys in my life, deep and great. I have loved, I have won honours, I have conquered difficulty; but never had I felt as now. It was as if one had been born again.

When we had gazed upon them, blessing them and thanking God, I gave orders that all our company should be called to the tent, that we might consider whether any new step could now be taken: Agnès with the other women sitting apart on one side and waiting. I recognised even in the excitement of such a time that theirs was no easy part. To sit there silent, to wait till we had spoken, to be bound by what we decided, and to have no voice – yes, that was hard. They thought they knew better than we did: but they were silent, devouring us with their eager eyes. I love one woman more than all the world; I count her the best thing that God has made; yet would I not be as Agnès for all that life could give me. It was her part to be silent, and she was so, like the angel she is, while even Jacques Richard had the right to speak. *Mon Dieu!* but it is hard, I allow it; they have need to be angels. This thought passed through my mind even at the crisis which had now arrived. For at such moments one sees everything, one thinks of everything, though it is only after that one remembers what one has seen and thought. When my fellow-citizens gathered together (we were now less than a hundred in number, so many had gone from us), I took it upon myself to speak. We were a haggard, worn-eyed company, having had neither shelter nor sleep nor even food, save in hasty snatches. I stood at the door of the tent and they below, for the ground sloped a little. Beside me were M. le Curé, M. de Bois-Sombre, and one or two others of the chief citizens. 'My friends,' I said, 'you have seen that a new circumstance has occurred. It is not within our power to tell what its meaning is, yet it must be a symptom of good. For my own part, to see these towers makes

the air lighter. Let us think of the Church as we may, no one can deny that the towers of Semur are dear to our hearts.'

'M. le Maire,' said M. de Bois-Sombre, interrupting, 'I speak I am sure the sentiments of my fellow-citizens when I say that there is no longer any question among us concerning the Church; it is an admirable institution, a universal advantage—'

'Yes, yes,' said the crowd, 'yes, certainly!' and some added, 'It is the only safeguard, it is our protection,' and some signed themselves. In the crowd I saw Riou, who had done this at the *octroi.* But the sign did not surprise me now.

M. le Curé stood by my side, but he did not smile. His countenance was dark, almost angry. He stood quite silent, with his eyes on the ground. It gave him no pleasure, this profession of faith.

'It is well, my friends,' said I, 'we are all in accord; and the good God has permitted us again to see these towers. I have called you together to collect your ideas. This change must have a meaning. It has been suggested to me that we might send an ambassador – a messenger, if that is possible, into the city—'

Here I stopped short; and a shiver ran through me – a shiver which went over the whole company. We were all pale as we looked in each other's faces; and for a moment no one ventured to speak. After this pause it was perhaps natural that he who first found his voice should be the last who had any right to give an opinion. Who should it be but Jacques Richard? 'M. le Maire,' cried the fellow, 'speaks at his ease – but who will thus risk himself?' Probably he did not mean that his grumbling should be heard, but in the silence every sound was audible; there was a gasp, a catching of the breath, and all turned their eyes again upon me. I did not pause to think what answer I should give. 'I!' I cried. 'Here stands one who will risk himself, who will perish if need be—'

Something stirred behind me. It was Agnès who had risen to her feet, who stood with her lips parted and quivering, with her hands clasped, as if about to speak. But she did not speak. Well! she had proposed to do it. Then why not I?

'Let me make the observation,' said another of our fellow-citizens, Bordereau the banker, 'that this would not be just. Without M. le Maire we should be a mob without a head. If a messenger is to be sent, let it be some one not so indispensable—'

'Why send a messenger?' said another, Philip Leclerc. 'Do we know that these Messieurs will admit any one? and how can you speak, how can you parley with those –' and he too, was seized with a shiver – 'whom you cannot see?'

Then there came another voice out of the crowd. It was one who would not show himself, who was conscious of the mockery in his tone. 'If there is any one sent, let it be M. le Curé,' it said.

M. le Curé stepped forward. His pale countenance flushed red. 'Here am I,' he said, 'I am ready; but he who spoke speaks to mock me. Is it befitting in this presence?'

There was a struggle among the men. Whoever it was who had spoken (I did not wish to know), I had no need to condemn the mocker; they themselves silenced him; then Jacques Richard (still less worthy of credit) cried out again with a voice that was husky. What are men made of? Notwithstanding everything, it was from the *cabaret*, from the wineshop, that he had come. He said, 'Though M. le Maire will not take my opinion, yet it is this. Let them reopen the chapel in the hospital. The ladies of St Jean—'

'Hold thy peace,' I said, 'miserable!' But a murmur rose. 'Though it is not his part to speak, I agree,' said one. 'And I.' 'And I.' There was well-nigh a tumult of consent; and this made me angry. Words were on my lips which it might have been foolish to utter, when M. de Bois-Sombre, who is a man of judgment, interfered.

'M. le Maire,' he said, 'as there are none of us here who would show disrespect to the Church and holy things – that is understood – it is not necessary to enter into details. Every restriction that would wound the most susceptible is withdrawn; not one more than another, but all. We have been indifferent in the past, but for the future you will agree with me that everything shall be changed. The ambassador – whoever he may be –' he added with a catching of his breath, 'must be empowered to promise – everything – submission to all that may be required.'

Here the women could not restrain themselves; they all rose up with a cry, and many of them began to weep. 'Ah!' said one with a hysterical sound of laughter in her tears. '*Sante Mère!* it will be heaven upon earth.'

M. le Curé said nothing; a keen glance of wonder, yet of subdued triumph, shot from under his eyelids. As for me, I wrung my hands: 'What you say will be superstition; it will be hypocrisy,' I cried.

But at that moment a further incident occurred. Suddenly, while we deliberated, a long loud peal of a trumpet sounded into the air. I have already said that many sounds had been heard before; but this was different; there was not one of us that did not feel that this was addressed to himself. The agitation was extreme; it was a summons, the beginning of some distinct communication. The crowd scattered; but for

myself, after a momentary struggle, I went forward resolutely. I did not even look back at my wife. I was no longer Martin Dupin, but the Maire of Semur, the saviour of the community. Even Bois-Sombre quailed: but I felt that it was in me to hold head against death itself; and before I had gone two steps I felt rather than saw that M. le Curé had come to my side. We went on without a word; gradually the others collected behind us, following yet straggling here and there upon the inequalities of the ground.

Before us lay the cloud that was Semur, a darkness defined by the shining of the summer day around, the river escaping from that gloom as from a cavern, the towers piercing through, but the sunshine thrown back on every side from that darkness. I have spoken of the walls as if we saw them, but there were no walls visible, nor any gate, though we all turned like blind men to where the Porte St Lambert was. There was the broad vacant road leading up to it, leading into the gloom. We stood there at a little distance. Whether it was human weakness or an invisible barrier, how can I tell? We stood thus immovable, with the trumpet pealing out over us, out of the cloud. It summoned every man as by his name. To me it was not wonderful that this impression should come, but afterwards it was elicited from all that this was the feeling of each. Though no words were said, it was as the calling of our names. We all waited in such a supreme agitation as I cannot describe for some communication that was to come.

When suddenly, in a moment, the trumpet ceased; there was an interval of dead and terrible silence; then, each with a leap of his heart as if it would burst from his bosom, we saw a single figure slowly detach itself out of the gloom. 'My God!' I cried. My senses went from me; I felt my head go round like a straw tossed on the winds.

To know them so near, those mysterious visitors – to feel them, to hear them, was not that enough? But, to see! who could bear it? Our voices rang like broken chords, like a tearing and rending of sound. Some covered their faces with their hands; for our very eyes seemed to be drawn out of their sockets, fluttering like things with a separate life.

Then there fell upon us a strange and wonderful calm. The figure advanced slowly; there was weakness in it. The step, though solemn, was feeble; and if you can figure to yourself our consternation, the pause, the cry – our hearts dropping back as it might be into their places – the sudden stop of the wild panting in our breasts: when there became visible to us a human face well known, a man as we were. 'Lecamus!' I cried; and all the men round took it up, crowding nearer, trembling yet delivered from their terror; some even laughed in the relief. There was but one who had an air of discontent, and that was M. le Curé. As he said 'Lecamus!' like the rest, there was impatience, disappointment, anger in his tone.

And I, who had wondered where Lecamus had gone; thinking sometimes that he was one of the deserters who had left us! But when he came nearer his face was as the face of a dead man, and a cold chill came over us. His eyes, which were cast down, flickered under the thin eyelids in which all the veins were visible. His face was grey like that of the dying. 'Is he dead?' I said. But, except M. le Curé, no one knew that I spoke.

'Not even so,' said M. le Curé, with a mortification in his voice, which I have never forgotten. 'Not even so. That might be something. They teach us not by angels – by the fools and offscourings of the earth.'

And he would have turned away. It was a humiliation. Was not he the representative of the Unseen, the vicegerent, with power over heaven and hell? but something was here more strong then he. He stood by my side in spite of himself to listen to the ambassador. I will not deny that such a choice was strange, strange beyond measure, to me also.

'Lecamus,' I said, my voice trembling in my throat, 'have you been among the dead, and do you live?'

'I live,' he said; then looked around with tears upon the crowd. 'Good neighbours, good friends,' he said, and put out his hand and touched them; he was as much agitated as they.

'M. Lecamus,' said I, 'we are here in very strange circumstances, as you know: do not trifle with us. If you have indeed been with those who have taken the control of our city, do not keep us in suspense. You will see by the emblems of my office that it is to me you must address yourself; if you have a mission, speak.'

'It is just,' he said, 'it is just – but bear with me one moment. It is good to behold those who draw breath; if I have not loved you enough, my good neighbours, forgive me now!'

'Rouse yourself, Lecamus,' said I with some anxiety. 'Three days we have been suffering here; we are distracted with the suspense. Tell us your message – if you have anything to tell.'

'Three days!' he said, wondering; 'I should have said years. Time is long when there is neither night nor day.' Then, uncovering himself, he turned towards the city. 'They who have sent me would have you know that they come, not in anger but in friendship: for the love they bear you, and because it has been permitted—'

As he spoke his feebleness disappeared. He held his head high; and we clustered closer and closer round him, not losing a half word, not a tone, not a breath.

‘They are not the dead. They are the immortal. They are those who dwell – elsewhere. They have other work, which has been interrupted because of this trial. They ask, “Do you know now – do you know now?” this is what I am bidden to say.’

‘What’ – I said (I tried to say it, but my lips were dry), ‘What would they have us to know?’

But a clamour interrupted me. ‘Ah! yes, yes, yes!’ the people cried, men and women; some wept aloud, some signed themselves, some held up their hands to the skies. ‘Never more will we deny religion,’ they cried, ‘never more fail in our duties. They shall see how we will follow every office, how the churches shall be full, how we will observe the feasts and the days of the saints! M. Lecamus,’ cried two or three together; ‘go, tell these Messieurs that we will have masses said for them, that we will obey in everything. We have seen what comes of it when a city is without piety. Never more will we neglect the holy functions; we will vow ourselves to the holy Mother and the saints—’

‘And if those ladies wish it,’ cried Jacques Richard, ‘there shall be as many masses as there are priests to say them in the Hospital of St Jean.’

‘Silence, fellow!’ I cried; ‘is it for you to promise in the name of the Commune?’ I was almost beside myself. ‘M. Lecamus, is it for this that they have come?’

His head had begun to droop again, and a dimness came over his face. ‘Do I know?’ he said. ‘It was them I longed for, not to know their errand; but I have not yet said all. You are to send two – two whom you esteem the highest – to speak with them face to face.’

Then at once there rose a tumult among the people – an eagerness which nothing could subdue. There was a cry that the ambassadors were already elected, and we were pushed forward, M. le Curé and myself, towards the gate. They would not hear us speak. ‘We promise,’ they cried, ‘we promise everything; let us but get back.’ Had it been to sacrifice us they would have done the same; they would have killed us in their passion, in order to return to their city – and afterwards mourned us and honoured us as martyrs. But for the moment they had neither ruth nor fear. Had it been they who were going to reason not with flesh and blood, it would have been different; but it was we, not they; and they hurried us on as not willing that a moment should be lost. I had to struggle, almost to fight, in order to provide them with a leader, which was indispensable, before I myself went away. For who could tell if we should ever come back? For a moment I hesitated, thinking that it might be well to invest M. de Bois-Sombre as my deputy with my scarf of office; but then I reflected that when a man goes to battle, when he goes to risk his life, perhaps to lose it, for his people, it is his right to bear those signs which distinguish him from common men, which show in what office, for what cause, he is ready to die.

Accordingly I paused, struggling against the pressure of the people, and said in a loud voice, ‘In the absence of M. Barbou, who has forsaken us, I constitute the excellent M. Felix de Bois-Sombre my representative. In my absence my fellow-citizens will respect and obey him as myself.’ There was a cry of assent. They would have given their assent to anything that we might but go on. What was it to them? They took no thought of the heaving of my bosom, the beating of my heart. They left us on the edge of the darkness with our faces towards the gate. There we stood one breathless moment. Then the little postern slowly opened before us, and once more we stood within Semur.

CHAPTER 5

The Narrative of Paul Lecamus

M. Le Maire having requested me, on his entrance into Semur, to lose no time in drawing up an account of my residence in the town, to be placed with his own narrative, I have promised to do so to the best of my ability, feeling that my condition is a very precarious one, and my time for explanation may be short. Many things, needless to enumerate, press this upon my mind. It was a pleasure to me to see my neighbours when I first came out of the city; but their voices, their touch, their vehemence and eagerness wear me out. From my childhood up I have shrunk from close contact with my fellow-men. My mind has been busy with other thoughts; I have desired to investigate the mysterious and unseen. When I have walked abroad I have heard whispers in the air; I have felt the movement of wings, the gliding of unseen feet. To my comrades these have been a source of alarm and disquiet, but not to me; is not God in the unseen with all His angels? and not only so, but the best and wisest of men. There was a time indeed, when life acquired for me a charm. There was a smile which filled me with blessedness, and made the sunshine more sweet. But when she died my earthly joys died with her. Since then I have thought of little but the depths profound, into which she has disappeared like the rest.

I was in the garden of my house on that night when all the others left Semur. I was restless, my mind was disturbed. It seemed to me that I approached the crisis of my life. Since the time when I led M. le Maire beyond the walls, and we felt both of us the rush and pressure of that crowd, a feeling of expectation had been in my mind. I knew not what I looked for – but something I looked for that should change the world. The '*Sommation*' on the Cathedral doors did not surprise me. Why should it be a matter of wonder that the dead should come back? the wonder is that they do not. Ah! that is the wonder. How one can go away who loves you, and never return nor speak, nor send any message – that is the miracle: not that the heavens should bend down and the gates of Paradise roll back and those who have left us return. All my life it has been a marvel to me how they could be kept away. I could not stay in-doors on this strange night. My mind was full of agitation. I came out into the garden though it was dark. I sat down upon the bench under the trellis – she loved it. Often had I spent half the night there thinking of her.

It was very dark that night: the sky all veiled, no light anywhere – a night like November. One would have said there was snow in the air. I think I must have slept toward morning (I have observed throughout that the preliminaries of these occurrences have always been veiled in sleep), and when I woke suddenly it was to find myself, if I may so speak, the subject of a struggle. The struggle was within me, yet it was not I. In my mind there was a desire to rise from where I sat and go away, I could not tell where or why; but something in me said stay, and my limbs were as heavy as lead. I could not move; I sat still against my will; against one part of my will – but the other was obstinate and would not let me go. Thus a combat took place within me of which I knew not the meaning. While it went on I began to hear the sound of many feet, the opening of doors, the people pouring out into the streets. This gave me no surprise; it seemed to me that I understood why it was; only in my own case, I knew nothing. I listened to the steps pouring past, going on and on, faintly dying away in the distance, and there was a great stillness. I then became convinced, though I cannot tell how, that I was the only living man left in Semur; but neither did this trouble me. The struggle within me came to an end, and I experienced a great calm.

I cannot tell how long it was till I perceived a change in the air, in the darkness round me. It was like the movement of some one unseen. I have felt such a sensation in the night, when all was still, before now. I saw nothing. I heard nothing. Yet I was aware, I cannot tell how, that there was a great coming and going, and the sensation as of a multitude in the air. I then rose and went into my house, where Leocadie, my old housekeeper, had shut all the doors so carefully when she went to bed. They were now all open, even the door of my wife's room of which I kept always the key, and where no one entered but myself; the windows also were open. I looked out upon the Grande Rue, and all the other houses were

like mine. Everything was open, doors and windows, and the streets were full. There was in them a flow and movement of the unseen, without a sound, sensible only to the soul. I cannot describe it, for I neither heard nor saw, but felt. I have often been in crowds; I have lived in Paris, and once passed into England, and walked about the London streets. But never, it seemed to me, never was I aware of so many, of so great a multitude. I stood at my open window, and watched as in a dream. M. le Maire is aware that his house is visible from mine. Towards that a stream seemed to be always going, and at the windows and in the doorways was a sensation of multitudes like that which I have already described. Gazing out thus upon the revolution which was happening before my eyes, I did not think of my own house or what was passing there, till suddenly, in a moment, I was aware that some one had come in to me. Not a crowd as elsewhere; one. My heart leaped up like a bird let loose; it grew faint within me with joy and fear. I was giddy so that I could not stand. I called out her name, but low, for I was too happy, I had no voice. Besides was it needed, when heart already spoke to heart?

I had no answer, but I needed none. I laid myself down on the floor where her feet would be. Her presence wrapped me round and round. It was beyond speech. Neither did I need to see her face, nor to touch her hand. She was more near to me, more near, than when I held her in my arms. How long it was so, I cannot tell; it was long as love, yet short as the drawing of a breath. I knew nothing, felt nothing but Her, alone; all my wonder and desire to know departed from me. We said to each other everything without words – heart overflowing into heart. It was beyond knowledge or speech.

But this is not of public signification that I should occupy with it the time of M. le Maire.

After a while my happiness came to an end. I can no more tell how, than I can tell how it came. One moment, I was warm in her presence; the next, I was alone. I rose up staggering with blindness and woe – could it be that already, already it was over? I went out blindly following after her. My God, I shall follow, I shall follow, till life is over. She loved me; but she was gone.

Thus, despair came to me at the very moment when the longing of my soul was satisfied and I found myself among the unseen; but I cared for knowledge no longer, I sought only her. I lost a portion of my time so. I regret to have to confess it to M. le Maire. Much that I might have learned will thus remain lost to my fellow-citizens and the world. We are made so. What we desire eludes us at the moment of grasping it – or those affections which are the foundation of our lives preoccupy us, and blind the soul. Instead of endeavouring to establish my faith and enlighten my judgment as to those mysteries which have been my life-long study, all higher purpose departed from me; and I did nothing but rush through the city, groping among those crowds, seeing nothing, thinking of nothing – save of One.

From this also I awakened as out of a dream. What roused me was the pealing of the Cathedral bells. I was made to pause and stand still, and return to myself. Then I perceived, but dimly, that the thing which had happened to me was that which I had desired all my life. I leave this explanation of my failure[1] in public duty to the charity of M. le Maire.

The bells of the Cathedral brought me back to myself – to that which we call reality in our language; but of all that was around me when I regained consciousness, it now appeared to me that I only was a dream. I was in the midst of a world where all was in movement. What the current was which flowed around me I know not; if it was thought which becomes sensible among spirits, if it was action, I cannot tell. But the energy, the force, the living that was in them, that could no one misunderstand. I stood in the streets, lagging and feeble, scarcely able to wish, much less to think. They pushed against me, put me aside, took no note of me. In the unseen world described by a poet whom M. le Maire has probably heard of, the man who traverses Purgatory (to speak of no other place) is seen by all, and is a wonder to all he meets – his shadow, his breath separate him from those around him. But whether the unseen life has changed, or if it is I who am not worthy their attention, this I know that I stood in our city like a ghost, and no one took any heed of me. When there came back upon me slowly my old desire to inquire, to understand, I was met with this difficulty at the first – that no one heeded me. I went through and through the streets, sometimes I paused to look round, to implore that which swept by me to make itself known. But the stream went along like soft air, like the flowing of a river, setting me aside from time to time, as the air will displace a straw, or the water a stone, but no more. There was neither languor nor lingering. I was the only passive thing, the being without occupation. Would you have paused in your labours to tell an idle traveller the meaning of our lives, before the day when you left Semur? Nor would they: I was driven hither and thither by the current of that life, but no one stepped forth out of the unseen to hear my questions or to answer me how this might be.

You have been made to believe that all was darkness in Semur. M. le Maire, it was not so. The darkness wrapped the walls in a winding sheet; but within, soon after you were gone, there arose a sweet and wonderful light – a light that was neither of the sun nor of the moon; and presently, after the ringing of the bells, the silence departed as the darkness had departed. I began to hear, first a murmur, then the

sound of the going which I had felt without hearing it – then a faint tinkle of voices – and at the last, as my mind grew attuned to these wonders, the very words they said. If they spoke in our language or in another, I cannot tell; but I understood. How long it was before the sensation of their presence was aided by the happiness of hearing I know not, nor do I know how the time has passed, or how long it is, whether years or days, that I have been in Semur with those who are now there; for the light did not vary – there was no night or day. All I know is that suddenly, on awakening from a sleep (for the wonder was that I could sleep, sometimes sitting on the Cathedral steps, sometimes in my own house; where sometimes also I lingered and searched about for the crusts that Leocadie had left), I found the whole world full of sound. They sang going in bands about the streets; they talked to each other as they went along every way. From the houses, all open, where everyone could go who would, there came the soft chiming of those voices. And at first every sound was full of gladness and hope. The song they sang first was like this: 'Send us, send us to our father's house. Many are our brethren, many and dear. They have forgotten, forgotten, forgotten! But when we speak, then will they hear.' And the others answered: 'We have come, we have come to the house of our fathers. Sweet are the homes, the homes we were born in. As we remember, so will they remember. When we speak, when we speak, they will hear.' Do not think that these were the words they sang; but it was like this. And as they sang there was joy and expectation everywhere. It was more beautiful than any of our music, for it was full of desire and longing, yet hope and gladness; whereas among us, where there is longing, it is always sad. Later a great singer, I know not who he was, one going past as on a majestic soft wind, sang another song, of which I shall tell you by and by. I do not think he was one of them. They came out to the windows, to the doors, into all the streets and byways to hear him as he went past.

M. le Maire will, however, be good enough to remark that I did not understand all that I heard. In the middle of a phrase, in a word half breathed, a sudden barrier would rise. For a time I laboured after their meaning, trying hard and vainly to understand; but afterwards I perceived that only when they spoke of Semur, of you who were gone forth, and of what was being done, could I make it out. At first this made me only more eager to hear; but when thought came, then I perceived that of all my longing nothing was satisfied. Though I was alone with the unseen, I comprehended it not; only when it touched upon what I knew, then I understood.

At first all went well. Those who were in the streets, and at the doors and windows of the houses, and on the Cathedral steps, where they seemed to throng, listening to the sounding of the bells, spoke only of this that they had come to do. Of you and you only I heard. They said to each other, with great joy, that the women had been instructed, that they had listened, and were safe. There was pleasure in all the city. The singers were called forth, those who were best instructed (so I judged from what I heard), to take the place of the warders on the walls; and all, as they went along sang that song: 'Our brothers have forgotten; but when we speak, they will hear.' How was it, how was it that you did not hear? One time I was by the river *porte* in a boat; and this song came to me from the walls as sweet as Heaven. Never have I heard such a song. The music was beseeching, it moved the very heart. 'We have come out of the unseen,' they sang; 'for love of you; believe us, believe us! Love brings us back to earth; believe us believe us!' How was it that you did not hear? When I heard those singers sing, I wept; they beguiled the heart out of my bosom. They sang, they shouted, the music swept about all the walls: 'Love brings us back to earth, believe us!' M. le Maire, I saw you from the river gate; there was a look of perplexity upon your face; and one put his curved hand to his ear as if to listen to some thin far-off sound, when it was like a storm, like a tempest of music!

After that there was a great change in the city. The choirs came back from the walls marching more slowly, and with a sighing through all the air. A sigh, nay, something like a sob breathed through the streets. 'They cannot hear us, or they will not hear us.' Wherever I turned, this was what I heard: 'They cannot hear us.' The whole town, and all the houses that were teeming with souls, and all the street, where so many were coming and going, was full of wonder and dismay. (If you will take my opinion, they know pain as well as joy, M. le Maire, Those who are in Semur. They are not as gods, perfect and sufficing to themselves, nor are they all-knowing and all-wise, like the good God. They hope like us, and desire, and are mistaken; but do no wrong. This is my opinion. I am no more than other men, that you should accept it without support; but I have lived among them, and this is what I think.) They were taken by surprise; they did not understand it any more than we understand when we have put forth all our strength and fail. They were confounded, if I could judge rightly. Then there arose cries from one to another: 'Do you forget what was said to us?' and, 'We were warned, we were warned.' There went a sighing over all the city: 'They cannot hear us, our voices are not as their voices; they cannot see us. We have taken their homes from them, and they know not the reason.' My heart was wrung for their disappointment. I longed to tell them that neither had I heard at once; but it was only after a time that I

ventured upon this. And whether I spoke, and was heard; or if it was read in my heart, I cannot tell. There was a pause made round me as if of wondering and listening, and then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, a face suddenly turned and looked into my face.

M. le Maire, it was the face of your father, Martin Dupin, whom I remember as well as I remember my own father. He was the best man I ever knew. It appeared to me for a moment, that face alone, looking at me with questioning eyes.

There seemed to be agitation and doubt for a time after this; some went out (so I understood) on embassies among you, but could get no hearing; some through the gates, some by the river. And the bells were rung that you might hear and know; but neither could you understand the bells. I wandered from one place to another, listening and watching – till the unseen became to me as the seen, and I thought of the wonder no more. Sometimes there came to me vaguely a desire to question them, to ask whence they came and what was the secret of their living, and why they were here? But if I had asked who would have heard me? and desire had grown faint in my heart; all I wished for was that you should hear, that you should understand; with this wish Semur was full. They thought but of this. They went to the walls in bands, each in their order, and as they came all the others rushed to meet them, to ask, 'What news?' I following, now with one, now with another, breathless and footsore as they glided along. It is terrible when flesh and blood live with those who are spirits. I toiled after them. I sat on the Cathedral steps, and slept and waked, and heard the voices still in my dream. I prayed, but it was hard to pray. Once following a crowd I entered your house, M. le Maire, and went up, though I scarcely could drag myself along. There many were assembled as in council. Your father was at the head of all. He was the one, he only, who knew me. Again he looked at me and I saw him, and in the light of his face an assembly such as I have seen in pictures. One moment it glimmered before me and then it was gone. There were the captains of all the bands waiting to speak, men and women. I heard them repeating from one to another the same tale. One voice was small and soft like a child's; it spoke of you. 'We went to him,' it said; and your father, M. le Maire, he too joined in, and said: 'We went to him – but he could not hear us.' And some said it was enough – that they had no commission from on high, that they were but permitted, – that it was their own will to do it – and that the time had come to forbear.

Now, while I listened, my heart was grieved that they should fail. This gave me a wound for myself who had trusted in them, and also for them. But I, who am I, a poor man without credit among my neighbours, a dreamer, one whom many despise, that I should come to their aid? Yet I could not listen and take no part. I cried out: 'Send me. I will tell them in words they understand.' The sound of my voice was like a roar in that atmosphere. It sent a tremble into the air. It seemed to rend me as it came forth from me, and made me giddy, so that I would have fallen had not there been a support afforded me. As the light was going out of my eyes I saw again the faces looking at each other, questioning, benign, beautiful heads one over another, eyes that were clear as the heavens, but sad. I trembled while I gazed: there was the bliss of heaven in their faces, yet they were sad. Then everything faded. I was led away, I know not how, and brought to the door and put forth. I was not worthy to see the blessed grieve. That is a sight upon which the angels look with awe, and which bring those tears which are salvation into the eyes of God.

I went back to my house, weary yet calm. There were many in my house; but because my heart was full of one who was not there, I knew not those who were there. I sat me down where she had been. I was weary, more weary than ever before, but calm. Then I bethought me that I knew no more than at the first, that I had lived among the unseen as if they were my neighbours, neither fearing them, nor hearing those wonders which they have to tell. As I sat with my head in my hands, two talked to each other close by: 'Is it true that we have failed?' said one; and the other answered, 'Must not all fail that is not sent of the Father?' I was silent; but I knew them, they were the voices of my father and my mother. I listened as out of a faint, in a dream.

While I sat thus, with these voices in my ears, which a little while before would have seemed to me more worthy of note than anything on earth, but which now lulled me and comforted me, as a child is comforted by the voices of its guardians in the night, there occurred a new thing in the city like nothing I had heard before. It roused me notwithstanding my exhaustion and stupor. It was the sound as of some one passing through the city suddenly and swiftly, whether in some wonderful chariot, whether on some sweeping mighty wind, I cannot tell. The voices stopped that were conversing beside me, and I stood up, and with an impulse I could not resist went out, as if a king were passing that way. Straight, without turning to the right or left, through the city, from one gate to another, this passenger seemed going; and as he went there was the sound as of a proclamation, as if it were a herald denouncing war or ratifying peace. Whosoever he was, the sweep of his going moved my hair like a wind. At first the proclamation was but as a great shout, and I could not understand it; but as he came nearer the words became distinct.

‘Neither will they believe – though one rose from the dead.’ As it passed a murmur went up from the city, like the voice of a great multitude. Then there came sudden silence.

At this moment, for a time – M. le Maire will take my statement for what it is worth – I became unconscious of what passed further. Whether weariness overpowered me and I slept, as at the most terrible moment nature will demand to do, or if I fainted I cannot tell; but for a time I knew no more. When I came to myself, I was seated on the Cathedral steps with everything silent around me. From thence I rose up, moved by a will which was not mine, and was led softly across the Grande Rue, through the great square, with my face towards the Porte St Lambert; I went steadily on without hesitation, never doubting that the gates would open to me, doubting nothing, though I had never attempted to withdraw from the city before. When I came to the gate I said not a word, nor any one to me; but the door rolled slowly open before me, and I was put forth into the morning light, into the shining of the sun. I have now said everything I had to say. The message I delivered was said through me; I can tell no more. Let me rest a little; figure to yourselves, I have known no night of rest, nor eaten a morsel of bread for – did you say it was but three days?

CHAPTER 6

M. Le Maire Resumes his Narrative

We re-entered by the door for foot-passengers which is by the side of the great Porte St Lambert.

I will not deny that my heart was, as one may say, in my throat. A man does what is his duty, what his fellow-citizens expect of him; but that is not to say that he renders himself callous to natural emotion. My veins were swollen, the blood coursing through them like a high-flowing river; my tongue was parched and dry. I am not ashamed to admit that from head to foot my body quivered and trembled. I was afraid – but I went forward; no man can do more. As for M. le Curé he said not a word. If he had any fears he concealed them as I did. But his occupation is with the ghostly and spiritual. To see men die, to accompany them to the verge of the grave, to create for them during the time of their suffering after death (if it is true that they suffer), an interest in heaven, this his profession must necessarily give him courage. My position is very different. I have not made up my mind upon these subjects. When one can believe frankly in all the Church says, many things become simple, which otherwise cause great difficulty in the mind. The mysterious and wonderful then find their natural place in the course of affairs; but when a man thinks for himself, and has to take everything on his own responsibility, and make all the necessary explanations, there is often great difficulty. So many things will not fit into their places, they straggle like weary men on a march. One cannot put them together, or satisfy one's self.

The sun was shining outside the walls when we re-entered Semur; but the first step we took was into a gloom as black as night, which did not re-assure us, it is unnecessary to say. A chill was in the air, of night and mist. We shivered, not with the nerves only but with the cold. And as all was dark, so all was still. I had expected to feel the presence of those who were there, as I had felt the crowd of the invisible before they entered the city. But the air was vacant, there was nothing but darkness and cold. We went on for a little way with a strange fervour of expectation. At each moment, at each step, it seemed to me that some great call must be made upon my self-possession and courage, some event happen; but there was nothing. All was calm, the houses on either side of the way were open, all but the office of the *octroi* which was black as night with its closed door. M. le Curé has told me since that he believed Them to be there, though unseen. This idea, however, was not in my mind. I had felt the unseen multitude; but here the air was free, there was no one interposing between us, who breathed as men, and the walls that surrounded us. Just within the gate a lamp was burning, hanging to its rope over our heads; and the lights were in the houses as if some one had left them there; they threw a strange glimmer into the darkness, flickering in the wind. By and by as we went on the gloom lessened, and by the time we had reached the Grande Rue, there was a clear steady pale twilight by which we saw everything, as by the light of day.

We stood at the corner of the square and looked round. Although still I heard the beating of my own pulses loudly working in my ears, yet it was less terrible than at first. A city when asleep is wonderful to look on, but in all the closed doors and windows one feels the safety and repose sheltered there which no man can disturb; and the air has in it a sense of life, subdued, yet warm. But here all was open, and all deserted. The house of the miser Grosgain was exposed from the highest to the lowest, but nobody was there to search for what was hidden. The hotel de Bois-Sombre, with its great *porte-cochère*, always so jealously closed; and my own house, which my mother and wife have always guarded so carefully, that no damp nor breath of night might enter, had every door and window wide open. Desolation seemed seated in all these empty places. I feared to go into my own dwelling. It seemed to me as if the dead must be lying within. *Bon Dieu*! Not a soul, not a shadow; all vacant in this soft twilight; nothing moving, nothing visible. The great doors of the Cathedral were wide open, and every little entry. How spacious the city looked, how silent, how wonderful! There was room for a squadron to wheel in the great square, but not so much as a bird, not a dog; all pale and empty. We stood for a long time (or it seemed a long time) at the corner, looking right and left. We were afraid to make a step farther. We knew not what to

do. Nor could I speak; there was much I wished to say, but something stopped my voice.

At last M. le Curé found utterance. His voice so moved the silence, that at first my heart was faint with fear; it was hoarse, and the sound rolled round the great square like muffled thunder. One did not seem to know what strange faces might rise at the open windows, what terrors might appear. But all he said was, 'We are ambassadors in vain.'

What was it that followed? My teeth chattered. I could not hear. It was as if 'in vain! in vain!' came back in echoes, more and more distant from every opening. They breathed all around us, then were still, then returned louder from beyond the river. M. le Curé, though he is a spiritual person, was no more courageous than I. With one impulse, we put out our hands and grasped each other. We retreated back to back, like men hemmed in by foes, and I felt his heart beating wildly, and he mine. Then silence, silence settled all around.

It was now my turn to speak. I would not be behind, come what might, though my lips were parched with mental trouble.

I said, 'Are we indeed too late? Lecamus must have deceived himself.'

To this there came no echo and no reply, which would be a relief, you may suppose; but it was not so. It was well-nigh more appalling, more terrible than the sound; for though we spoke thus, we did not believe the place was empty. Those whom we approached seemed to be wrapping themselves in silence, invisible, waiting to speak with some awful purpose when their time came.

There we stood for some minutes, like two children, holding each other's hands, leaning against each other at the corner of the square – as helpless as children, waiting for what should come next. I say it frankly, my brain and my heart were one throb. They plunged and beat so wildly that I could scarcely have heard any other sound. In this respect I think he was more calm. There was on his face that look of intense listening which strains the very soul. But neither he nor I heard anything, not so much as a whisper. At last, 'Let us go on,' I said. We stumbled as we went, with agitation and fear. We were afraid to turn our backs to those empty houses, which seemed to gaze at us with all their empty windows pale and glaring. Mechanically, scarce knowing what I was doing, I made towards my own house.

There was no one there. The rooms were all open and empty. I went from one to another, with a sense of expectation which made my heart faint; but no one was there, nor anything changed. Yet I do wrong to say that nothing was changed. In my library, where I keep my books, where my father and grandfather conducted their affairs, like me, one little difference struck me suddenly, as if some one had dealt me a blow. The old bureau which my grandfather had used, at which I remember standing by his knee, had been drawn from the corner where I had placed it out of the way (to make room for the furniture I preferred), and replaced, as in old times, in the middle of the room. It was nothing; yet how much was in this! though only myself could have perceived it. Some of the old drawers were open, full of old papers. I glanced over them in my agitation, to see if there might be any writing, any message addressed to me; but there was nothing, nothing but this silent sign of those who had been here. Naturally M. le Curé, who kept watch at the door, was unacquainted with the cause of my emotion. The last room I entered was my wife's. Her veil was lying on the white bed, as if she had gone out that moment, and some of her ornaments were on the table. It seemed to me that the atmosphere of mystery which filled the rest of the house was not here. A ribbon, a little ring, what nothings are these? Yet they make even emptiness sweet. In my Agnès's room there is a little shrine, more sacred to us than any altar. There is the picture of our little Marie. It is covered with a veil, embroidered with needlework which it is a wonder to see. Not always can even Agnès bear to look upon the face of this angel, whom God has taken from her. She has worked the little curtain with lilies, with white and virginal flowers; and no hand, not even mine, ever draws it aside. What did I see? The veil was boldly folded away; the face of the child looked at me across her mother's bed, and upon the frame of the picture was laid a branch of olive, with silvery leaves. I know no more but that I uttered a great cry, and flung myself upon my knees before this angel-gift. What stranger could know what was in my heart? M. le Curé, my friend, my brother, came hastily to me, with a pale countenance; but when he looked at me, he drew back and turned away his face, and a sob came from his breast. Never child had called him father, were it in heaven, were it on earth. Well I knew whose tender fingers had placed the branch of olive there.

I went out of the room and locked the door. It was just that my wife should find it where it had been laid.

I put my arm into his as we went out once more into the street. That moment had made us brother and brother. And this union made us more strong. Besides, the silence and the emptiness began to grow less terrible to us. We spoke in our natural voices as we came out, scarcely knowing how great was the difference between them and the whispers which had been all we dared at first to employ. Yet the sound of these louder tones scared us when we heard them for we were still trembling, not assured of

deliverance. It was he who showed himself a man, not I; for my heart was overwhelmed, the tears stood in my eyes, I had no strength to resist my impressions.

'Martin Dupin,' he said suddenly, 'it is enough. We are frightening ourselves with shadows. We are afraid even of our own voices. This must not be. Enough! Whosoever they were who have been in Semur, their visitation is over, and they are gone.'

'I think so,' I said faintly; 'but God knows.' Just then something passed me as sure as ever man passed me. I started back out of the way and dropped my friend's arm, and covered my eyes with my hands. It was nothing that could be seen; it was an air, a breath. M. le Curé looked at me wildly; he was as a man beside himself. He struck his foot upon the pavement and gave a loud and bitter cry.

'Is it delusion?' he said, 'O my God! or shall not even this, not even so much as this be revealed to me?'

To see a man who had so ruled himself, who had resisted every disturbance and stood fast when all gave way, moved thus at the very last to cry out with passion against that which had been denied to him, brought me back to myself. How often had I read it in his eyes before! He – the priest – the servant of the unseen – yet to all of us lay persons had that been revealed which was hid from him. A great pity was within me, and gave me strength. 'Brother,' I said, 'we are weak. If we saw heaven opened, could we trust to our vision now? Our imaginations are masters of us. So far as mortal eye can see, we are alone in Semur. Have you forgotten your psalm, and how you sustained us at the first? And now, your Cathedral is open to you, my brother. *Lætatus sum*,' I said. It was an inspiration from above, and no thought of mine; for it is well known, that though deeply respectful, I have never professed religion. With one impulse we turned, we went together, as in a procession, across the silent place, and up the great steps. We said not a word to each other of what we meant to do. All was fair and silent in the holy place; a breath of incense still in the air; a murmur of psalms (as one could imagine) far up in the high roof. There I served, while he said his mass. It was for my friend that this impulse came to my mind; but I was rewarded. The days of my childhood seemed to come back to me. All trouble, and care, and mystery, and pain, seemed left behind. All I could see was the glimmer on the altar of the great candlesticks, the sacred pyx in its shrine, the chalice, and the book. I was again an *enfant de chœur* robed in white, like the angels, no doubt, no disquiet in my soul – and my father kneeling behind among the faithful, bowing his head, with a sweetness which I too knew, being a father, because it was his child that tinkled the bell and swung the censer. Never since those days have I served the mass. My heart grew soft within me as the heart of a little child. The voice of M. le Curé was full of tears – it swelled out into the air and filled the vacant place. I knelt behind him on the steps of the altar and wept.

Then there came a sound that made our hearts leap in our bosoms. His voice wavered as if it had been struck by a strong wind; but he was a brave man, and he went on. It was the bells of the Cathedral that pealed out over our heads. In the midst of the office, while we knelt all alone, they began to ring as at Easter or some great festival. At first softly, almost sadly, like choirs of distant singers, that died away and were echoed and died again; then taking up another strain, they rang out into the sky with hurrying notes and clang of joy. The effect upon myself was wonderful. I no longer felt any fear. The illusion was complete. I was a child again, serving the mass in my little surplice – aware that all who loved me were kneeling behind, that the good God was smiling, and the Cathedral bells ringing out their majestic Amen.

M. le Curé came down the altar steps when his mass was ended. Together we put away the vestments and the holy vessels. Our hearts were soft; the weight was taken from them. As we came out the bells were dying away in long and low echoes, now faint, now louder, like mingled voices of gladness and regret. And whereas it had been a pale twilight when we entered, the clearness of the day had rolled sweetly in, and now it was fair morning in all the streets. We did not say a word to each other, but arm and arm took our way to the gates, to open to our neighbours, to call all our fellow-citizens back to Semur.

If I record here an incident of another kind, it is because of the sequel that followed. As we passed by the hospital of St Jean, we heard distinctly, coming from within, the accents of a feeble yet impatient voice. The sound revived for a moment the troubles that were stilled within us – but only for a moment. This was no visionary voice. It brought a smile to the grave face of M. le Curé and tempted me well nigh to laughter, so strangely did this sensation of the actual, break and disperse the visionary atmosphere. We went in without any timidity, with a conscious relaxation of the great strain upon us. In a little nook, curtained off from the great ward, lay a sick man upon his bed. 'Is it M. le Maire?' he said; '*à la bonne heure!* I have a complaint to make of the nurses for the night. They have gone out to amuse themselves; they take no notice of poor sick people. They have known for a week that I could not sleep; but neither have they given me a sleeping drought, nor endeavoured to distract me with cheerful conversation. And today, look you, M. le Maire, not one of the sisters has come near me!'

'Have you suffered, my poor fellow?' I said; but he would not go so far as this.

‘I don’t want to make complaints, M. le Maire; but the sisters do not come themselves as they used to do. One does not care to have a strange nurse, when one knows that if the sisters did their duty – But if it does not occur any more I do not wish it to be thought that I am the one to complain.’

‘Do not fear, *mom ami*,’ I said. ‘I will say to the Reverend Mother that you have been left too long alone.’

‘And listen, M. le Maire,’ cried the man; ‘those bells, will they never be done? My head aches with the din they make. How can one go to sleep with all that riot in one’s ears?’

We looked at each other, we could not but smile. So that which is joy and deliverance to one is vexation to another. As we went out again into the street the lingering music of the bells died out, and (for the first time for all these terrible days and nights) the great clock struck the hour. And as the clock struck, the last cloud rose like a mist and disappeared in flying vapours, and the full sunshine of noon burst on Semur.

CHAPTER 7

Supplement by M. de Bois-Sombre

When M. Le Maire disappeared within the mist, we all remained behind with troubled hearts. For my own part I was alarmed for my friend. M. Martin Dupin is not noble. He belongs, indeed, to the *haute bourgeoisie*, and all his antecedents are most respectable; but it is his personal character and admirable qualities which justify me in calling him my friend. The manner in which he has performed his duties to his fellow-citizens during this time of distress has been sublime. It is not my habit to take any share in public life; the unhappy circumstances of France have made this impossible for years. Nevertheless, I put aside my scruples when it became necessary, to leave him free for his mission. I gave no opinion upon that mission itself, or how far he was right in obeying the advice of a hare-brained enthusiast like Lecamus. Nevertheless the moment had come at which our banishment had become intolerable. Another day, and I should have proposed an assault upon the place. Our dead forefathers, though I would speak of them with every respect, should not presume upon their privilege. I do not pretend to be braver than other men, nor have I shown myself more equal than others to cope with the present emergency. But I have the impatience of my countrymen, and rather than rot here outside the gates, parted from Madame de Bois-Sombre and my children, who, I am happy to state, are in safety at the country house of the brave Dupin, I should have dared any hazard. This being the case, a new step of any kind called for my approbation, and I could not refuse under the circumstances – especially as no ceremony of installation was required or profession of loyalty to one government or another – to take upon me the office of coadjutor and act as deputy for my friend Martin outside the walls of Semur.

The moment at which I assumed the authority was one of great discouragement and depression. The men were tired to death. Their minds were worn out as well as their bodies. The excitement and fatigue had been more than they could bear. Some were for giving up the contest and seeking new homes for themselves. These were they, I need not remark, who had but little to lose; some seemed to care for nothing but to lie down and rest. Though it produced a great movement among us when Lecamus suddenly appeared coming out of the city; and the undertaking of Dupin and the excellent Curé was viewed with great interest, yet there could not but be signs apparent that the situation had lasted too long. It was *tendu* in the strongest degree, and when that is the case a reaction must come. It is impossible to say, for one thing, how great was our personal discomfort. We were as soldiers campaigning without a commissariat, or any precautions taken for our welfare; no food save what was sent to us from La Clairière and other places; no means of caring for our personal appearance, in which lies so much of the materials of self-respect. I say nothing of the chief features of all – the occupation of our homes by others – the forcible expulsion of which we had been the objects. No one could have been more deeply impressed than myself at the moment of these extraordinary proceedings; but we cannot go on with one monotonous impression, however serious, we other Frenchmen. Three days is a very long time to dwell in one thought; I myself had become impatient, I do not deny. To go away, which would have been very natural, and which Agatha proposed, was contrary to my instincts and interests both. I trust I can obey the logic of circumstances as well as another; but to yield is not easy, and to leave my hotel at Semur – now the chief residence, alas! of the Bois-Sombres – probably to the licence of a mob – for one can never tell at what moment Republican institutions may break down and sink back into the chaos from which they arose – was impossible. Nor would I forsake the brave Dupin without the strongest motive; but that the situation was extremely *tendu*, and a reaction close at hand, was beyond dispute.

I resisted the movement which my excellent friend made to take off and transfer to me his scarf of office. These things are much thought of among the *bourgeoisie*. '*Mon ami*,' I said, 'you cannot tell what use you may have for it; whereas our townsmen know me, and that I am not one to take up an unwarrantable position.' We then accompanied him to the neighbourhood of the Porte St Lambert. It was at that time invisible; we could but judge approximately. My men were unwilling to approach too near,

neither did I myself think it necessary. We parted, after giving the two envoys an honourable escort, leaving a clear space between us and the darkness. To see them disappear gave us all a startling sensation. Up to the last moment I had doubted whether they would obtain admittance. When they disappeared from our eyes, there came upon all of us an impulse of alarm. I myself was so far moved by it, that I called out after them in a sudden panic. For if any catastrophe had happened, how could I ever have forgiven myself, especially as Madame Dupin de la Clairière, a person entirely *comme il faut*, and of the most distinguished character, went after her husband, with a touching devotion, following him to the very edge of the darkness? I do not think, so deeply possessed was he by his mission, that he saw her. Dupin is very determined in his way; but he is imaginative and thoughtful, and it is very possible that, as he required all his powers to brace him for this enterprise, he made it a principle neither to look to the right hand nor the left. When we paused, and following after our two representatives, Madame Dupin stepped forth, a thrill ran through us all. Some would have called to her, for I heard many broken exclamations; but most of us were too much startled to speak. We thought nothing less than that she was about to risk herself by going after them into the city. If that was her intention – and nothing is more probable; for women are very daring, though they are timid – she was stopped, it is most likely, by that curious inability to move a step farther which we have all experienced. We saw her pause, clasp her hands in despair (or it might be in token of farewell to her husband), then, instead of returning, seat herself on the road on the edge of the darkness. It was a relief to all who were looking on to see her there.

In the reaction after that excitement I found myself in face of a great difficulty – what to do with my men, to keep them from demoralisation. They were greatly excited; and yet there was nothing to be done for them, for myself, for any of us, but to wait. To organise the patrol again, under the circumstances, would have been impossible. Dupin, perhaps, might have tried it with the *bourgeois* determination which so often carries its point in spite of all higher intelligence; but to me, who have not this commonplace way of looking at things, it was impossible. The worthy soul did not think in what a difficulty he left us. That intolerable, good-for-nothing Jacques Richard (whom Dupin protects unwisely, I cannot tell why), and who was already half-seas-over, had drawn several of his comrades with him towards the *cabaret*, which was always a danger to us. 'We will drink success to M. le Maire,' he said, '*mes bons amis*! That can do no one any harm; and as we have spoken up, as we have empowered him to offer handsome terms, to *Messieurs les Morts*—'

It was intolerable. Precisely at the moment when our fortune hung in the balance, and when, perhaps, an indiscreet word – 'Arrest that fellow,' I said. 'Riou, you are an official; you understand your duty. Arrest him on the spot, and confine him in the tent out of the way of mischief. Two of you mount guard over him. And let a party be told off, of which you will take the command, Louis Bertin, to go at once to La Clairière and beg the Reverend Mothers of the hospital to favour us with their presence. It will be well to have those excellent ladies in our front whatever happens; and you may communicate to them the unanimous decision about their chapel. You Robert Lemaire, with an escort, will proceed to the *campagne* of M. Barbou, and put him in possession of the circumstances. Those of you who have a natural wish to seek a little repose will consider yourselves as discharged from duty and permitted to do so. Your Maire having confided to me his authority – not without your consent – (this I avow I added with some difficulty, for who cared for their assent? but a Republican Government offers a premium to every insincerity), I wait with confidence to see these dispositions carried out.'

This, I am happy to say, produced the best effect. They obeyed me without hesitation; and, fortunately for me, slumber seized upon the majority. Had it not been for this, I can scarcely tell how I should have got out of it. I felt drowsy myself, having been with the patrol the greater part of the night; but to yield to such weakness was, in my position, of course impossible.

This, then, was our attitude during the last hours of suspense, which were perhaps the most trying of all. In the distance might be seen the little bands marching towards La Clairière, on one side, and M. Barbou's country-house ('La Corbeille des Raisins') on the other. It goes without saying that I did not want M. Barbou, but it was the first errand I could think of. Towards the city, just where the darkness began that enveloped it, sat Madame Dupin. That *sainte-femme* was praying for her husband, who could doubt? And under the trees, wherever they could find a favourable spot, my men lay down on the grass, and most of them fell asleep. My eyes were heavy enough, but responsibility drives away rest. I had but one nap of five minutes' duration, leaning against a tree, when it occurred to me that Jacques Richard, whom I sent under escort half-drunk to the tent, was not the most admirable companion for that poor visionary Lecamus, who had been accommodated there. I roused myself, therefore, though unwillingly, to see whether these two, so discordant, could agree.

I met Lecamus at the tent-door. He was coming out, very feeble and tottering, with that dazed look

which (according to me) has always been characteristic of him. He had a bundle of papers in his hand. He had been setting in order his report of what had happened to him, to be submitted to the Maire. ‘Monsieur,’ he said, with some irritation (which I forgave him), ‘you have always been unfavourable to me. I owe it to you that this unhappy drunkard has been sent to disturb me in my feebleness and the discharge of a public duty.’

‘My good Monsieur Lecamus,’ said I, ‘you do my recollection too much honour. The fact is, I had forgotten all about you and your public duty. Accept my excuses. Though indeed your supposition that I should have taken the trouble to annoy you, and your description of that good-for-nothing as an unhappy drunkard, are signs of intolerance which I should not have expected in a man so favoured.’

This speech, though too long, pleased me, for a man of this species, a revolutionary (are not all visionaries revolutionaries?) is always, when occasion offers, to be put down. He disarmed me, however, by his humility. He gave a look round. ‘Where can I go?’ he said, and there was pathos in his voice. At length he perceived Madame Dupin sitting almost motionless on the road. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘there is my place.’ The man, I could not but perceive, was very weak. His eyes were twice their natural size, his face was the colour of ashes; through his whole frame there was a trembling; the papers shook in his hand. A compunction seized my mind: I regretted to have sent that piece of noise and folly to disturb a poor man so suffering and weak. ‘Monsieur Lecamus,’ I said, ‘forgive me. I acknowledge that it was inconsiderate. Remain here in comfort, and I will find for this unruly fellow another place of confinement.’

‘Nay,’ he said, ‘there is my place,’ pointing to where Madame Dupin sat. I felt disposed for a moment to indulge in a pleasantry, to say that I approved his taste; but on second thoughts I forebore. He went tottering slowly across the broken ground, hardly able to drag himself along. ‘Has he had any refreshment?’ I asked of one of the women who were about. They told me yes, and this restored my composure; for after all I had not meant to annoy him, I had forgotten he was there – a trivial fault in circumstances so exciting. I was more easy in my mind, however, I confess it, when I saw that he had reached his chosen position safely. The man looked so weak. It seemed to me that he might have died on the road.

I thought I could almost perceive the gate, with Madame Dupin seated under the battlements, her charming figure relieved against the gloom, and that poor Lecamus lying, with his papers fluttering at her feet. This was the last thing I was conscious of.

CHAPTER 8

Extract from the Narrative of Madame Dupin de la Clairière (née *de Champfleurie*)

I went with my husband to the city gate. I did not wish to distract his mind from what he had undertaken, therefore I took care he should not see me; but to follow close, giving the sympathy of your whole heart, must not that be a support? If I am asked whether I was content to let him go, I cannot answer yes; but had another than Martin been chosen, I could not have borne it. What I desired, was to go myself. I was not afraid: and if it had proved dangerous, if I had been broken and crushed to pieces between the seen and the unseen, one could not have had a more beautiful fate. It would have made me happy to go. But perhaps it was better that the messenger should not be a woman; they might have said it was delusion, an attack of the nerves. We are not trusted in these respects, though I find it hard to tell why.

But I went with Martin to the gate. To go as far as was possible, to be as near as possible, that was something. If there had been room for me to pass, I should have gone, and with such gladness! for God He knows that to help to thrust my husband into danger, and not to share it, was terrible to me. But no; the invisible line was still drawn, beyond which I could not stir. The door opened before him, and closed upon me. But though to see him disappear into the gloom was anguish, yet to know that he was the man by whom the city should be saved was sweet. I sat down on the spot where my steps were stayed. It was close to the wall, where there is a ledge of stonework round the basement of the tower. There I sat down to wait till he should come again.

If any one thinks, however, that we, who were under the shelter of the roof of La Clairière were less tried than our husbands, it is a mistake; our chief grief was that we were parted from them, not knowing what suffering, what exposure they might have to bear, and knowing that they would not accept, as most of us were willing to accept, the interpretation of the mystery; but there was a certain comfort in the fact that we had to be very busy, preparing a little food to take to them, and feeding the others. La Clairière is a little country house, not a great château, and it was taxed to the utmost to afford some covert to the people. The children were all sheltered and cared for; but as for the rest of us we did as we could. And how gay they were, all the little ones! What was it to them all that had happened? It was a fête for them to be in the country, to be so many together, to run in the fields and the gardens. Sometimes their laughter and their happiness were more than we could bear. Agathe de Bois-Sombre, who takes life hardly, who is more easily deranged than I, was one who was much disturbed by this. But was it not to preserve the children that we were commanded to go to La Clairière? Some of the women also were not easy to bear with. When they were put into our rooms they too found it a fête, and sat down among the children, and ate and drank, and forgot what it was; what awful reason had driven us out of our homes. These were not, oh let no one think so! the majority; but there were some, it cannot be denied; and it was difficult for me to calm down Bonne Maman, and keep her from sending them away with their babes. 'But they are *misérables*,' she said. 'If they were to wander and be lost, if they were to suffer as thou sayest, where would be the harm? I have no patience with the idle, with those who impose upon thee.' It is possible that Bonne Maman was right – but what then? 'Preserve the children and the sick,' was the mission that had been given to me. My own room was made the hospital. Nor did this please Bonne Maman. She bid me if I did not stay in it myself to give it to the Bois-Sombres, to some who deserved it. But is it not they who need most who deserve most? Bonne Maman cannot bear that the poor and wretched should live in her Martin's chamber. He is my Martin no less. But to give it up to our Lord is not that to sanctify it? There are who have put Him into their own bed when they imagined they were but sheltering a sick beggar there; that He should have the best was sweet to me: and could not I pray all the better that our Martin should be enlightened, should come to the true sanctuary? When I said this Bonne Maman wept. It was the grief of her heart that Martin thought otherwise than as we do. Nevertheless she

said, ‘He is so good; the *bon Dieu* knows how good he is;’ as if even his mother could know that so well as I!

But with the women and the children crowding everywhere, the sick in my chamber, the helpless in every corner, it will be seen that we, too, had much to do. And our hearts were elsewhere, with those who were watching the city, who were face to face with those in whom they had not believed. We were going and coming all day long with food for them, and there never was a time of the night or day that there were not many of us watching on the brow of the hill to see if any change came in Semur. Agathe and I, and our children, were all together in one little room. She believed in God, but it was not any comfort to her; sometimes she would weep and pray all day long; sometimes entreat her husband to abandon the city, to go elsewhere and live, and fly from this strange fate. She is one who cannot endure to be unhappy – not to have what she wishes. As for me, I was brought up in poverty, and it is no wonder if I can more easily submit. She was not willing that I should come this morning to Semur. In the night the Mere Julie had roused us, saying she had seen a procession of angels coming to restore us to the city. Ah! to those who have no knowledge it is easy to speak of processions of angels. But to those who have seen what an angel is – how they flock upon us unawares in the darkness, so that one is confused, and scarce can tell if it is reality or a dream; to those who have heard a little voice soft as the dew coming out of heaven! I said to them – for all were in a great tumult – that the angels do not come in processions, they steal upon us unaware, they reveal themselves in the soul. But they did not listen to me; even Agathe took pleasure in hearing of the revelation. As for me, I had denied myself, I had not seen Martin for a night and a day. I took one of the great baskets, and I went with the women who were the messengers for the day. A purpose formed itself in my heart, it was to make my way into the city, I know not how, and implore them to have pity upon us before the people were distraught. Perhaps, had I been able to refrain from speaking to Martin, I might have found the occasion I wished; but how could I conceal my desire from my husband? And now all is changed, I am rejected and he is gone. He was more worthy. Bonne Maman is right. Our good God, who is our father, does He require that one should make profession of faith, that all should be alike? He sees the heart; and to choose my Martin, does not that prove that He loves best that which is best, not I, or a priest, or one who makes professions? Thus, I sat down at the gate with a great confidence, though also a trembling in my heart. He who had known how to choose him among all the others, would not He guard him? It was a proof to me once again that heaven is true, that the good God loves and comprehends us all, to see how His wisdom, which is unerring, had chosen the best man in Semur.

And M. le Curé, that goes without saying, he is a priest of priests, a true servant of God.

I saw my husband go: perhaps, God knows, into danger, perhaps to some encounter such as might fill the world with awe – to meet those who read the thought in your mind before it comes to your lips. Well! there is no thought in Martin that is not noble and true. Me, I have follies in my heart, every kind of folly; but he! – the tears came in a flood to my eyes, but I would not shed them, as if I were weeping for fear and sorrow – no – but for happiness to know that falsehood was not in him. My little Marie, a holy virgin, may look into her father’s heart – I do not fear the test.

The sun came warm to my feet as I sat on the foundation of our city, but the projection of the tower gave me a little shade. All about was a great peace. I thought of the psalm which says, ‘He will give it to His beloved sleeping’ – that is true; but always there are some who are used as instruments, who are not permitted to sleep. The sounds that came from the people gradually ceased; they were all very quiet. M. de Bois-Sombre I saw at a distance making his dispositions. Then M. Paul Lecamus, whom I had long known, came up across the field, and seated himself close to me upon the road. I have always had a great sympathy with him since the death of his wife; ever since there has been an abstraction in his eyes, a look of desolation. He has no children or any one to bring him back to life. Now, it seemed to me that he had the air of a man who was dying. He had been in the city while all of us had been outside.

‘Monsieur Lecamus,’ I said, ‘you look very ill, and this is not a place for you. Could not I take you somewhere, where you might be more at your ease?’

‘It is true, Madame,’ he said, ‘the road is hard, but the sunshine is sweet; and when I have finished what I am writing for M. le Maire, it will be over. There will be no more need—’

I did not understand what he meant. I asked him to let me help him, but he shook his head. His eyes were very hollow, in great caves, and his face was the colour of ashes. Still he smiled. ‘I thank you, Madame,’ he said, ‘infinitely; everyone knows that Madame Dupin is kind; but when it is done, I shall be free.’

‘I am sure, M. Lecamus, that my husband – that M. le Maire – would not wish you to trouble yourself, to be hurried—’

‘No,’ he said, ‘not he, but I. Who else could write what I have to write? It must be done while it is day.’

‘Then there is plenty of time, M. Lecamus. All the best of the day is yet to come; it is still morning. If you could but get as far as La Clairière. There we would nurse you – restore you.’

He shook his head. ‘You have enough on your hands at La Clairière,’ he said; and then, leaning upon the stones, he began to write again with his pencil. After a time, when he stopped, I ventured to ask – ‘Monsieur Lecamus, is it, indeed, those – whom we have known, who are in Semur?’

He turned his dim eyes upon me. ‘Does Madame Dupin,’ he said, ‘require to ask?’

‘No, no. It is true. I have seen and heard. But yet, when a little time passes, you know? one wonders; one asks one’s self, was it a dream?’

‘That is what I fear,’ he said. ‘I, too, if life went on, might ask, notwithstanding all that has occurred to me, Was it a dream?’

‘M. Lecamus, you will forgive me if I hurt you. You saw – *her*?’

‘No. Seeing – what is seeing? It is but a vulgar sense, it is not all; but I sat at her feet. She was with me. We were one, as of old—.’ A gleam of strange light came into his dim eyes. ‘Seeing is not everything, Madame.’

‘No, M. Lecamus. I heard the dear voice of my little Marie.’

‘Nor is hearing everything,’ he said hastily. ‘Neither did she speak; but she was there. We were one; we had no need to speak. What is speaking or hearing when heart wells into heart? For a very little moment, only for a moment, Madame Dupin.’

I put out my hand to him; I could not say a word. How was it possible that she could go away again, and leave him so feeble, so worn, alone?

‘Only a very little moment,’ he said, slowly. ‘There were other voices – but not hers. I think I am glad it was in the spirit we met, she and I – I prefer not to see her till – after—’

‘Oh, M. Lecamus, I am too much of the world! To see them, to hear them – it is for this I long.’

‘No, dear Madame. I would not have it till – after—. But I must make haste, I must write, I hear the hum approaching—’

I could not tell what he meant; but I asked no more. How still everything was! The people lay asleep on the grass, and I, too, was overwhelmed by the great quiet. I do not know if I slept, but I dreamed. I saw a child very fair and tall always near me, but hiding her face. It appeared to me in my dream that all I wished for was to see this hidden countenance, to know her name; and that I followed and watched her, but for a long time in vain. All at once she turned full upon me, held out her arms to me. Do I need to say who it was? I cried out in my dream to the good God, that He had done well to take her from me – that this was worth it all. Was it a dream? I would not give that dream for years of waking life. Then I started and came back, in a moment, to the still morning sunshine, the sight of the men asleep, the roughness of the wall against which I leant. Some one laid a hand on mine. I opened my eyes, not knowing what it was – if it might be my husband coming back, or her whom I had seen in my dream. It was M. Lecamus. He had risen up upon his knees – his papers were all laid aside. His eyes in those hollow caves were opened wide, and quivering with a strange light. He had caught my wrist with his worn hand. ‘Listen!’ he said; his voice fell to a whisper; a light broke over his face, ‘Listen!’ he cried; ‘they are coming.’ While he thus grasped my wrist, holding up his weak and wavering body in that strained attitude, the moments passed very slowly. I was afraid of him, of his worn face and thin hands, and the wild eagerness about him. I am ashamed to say it, but so it was. And for this reason it seemed long to me, though I think not more than a minute, till suddenly the bells rang out, sweet and glad as they ring at Easter for the resurrection. There had been ringing of bells before, but not like this. With a start and universal movement the sleeping men got up from where they lay – not one but every one, coming out of the little hollows and from under the trees as if from graves. They all sprang up to listen, with one impulse; and as for me, knowing that Martin was in the city, can it be wondered at if my heart beat so loud that I was incapable of thought of others! What brought me to myself was the strange weight of M. Lecamus on my arm. He put his other hand upon me, all cold in the brightness, all trembling. He raised himself thus slowly to his feet. When I looked at him I shrieked aloud. I forgot all else. His face was transformed – a smile came upon it that was ineffable – the light blazed up, and then quivered and flickered in his eyes like a dying flame. All this time he was leaning his weight upon my arm. Then suddenly he loosed his hold of me, stretched out his hands, stood up, and – died. My God! shall I ever forget him as he stood – his head raised, his hands held out, his lips moving, the eyelids opened wide with a quiver, the light flickering and dying! He died first, standing up, saying something with his pale lips – then fell. And it seemed to me all at once, and for a moment, that I heard a sound of many people marching past, the murmur and hum of a great multitude; and softly, softly I was put out of the way, and a voice said, ‘*Adieu, ma sœur*.’ ‘*Ma sœur!*’ who called me ‘*Ma sœur*’? I have no sister. I cried out, saying I know not what. They told me after that I wept and wrung my hands, and said, ‘Not thee, not thee, Marie!’ But after that I knew no more.

CHAPTER 9

The Narrative of Madame Veuve Dupin (née *Lepelletier)*

To complete the *Procés verbal*, my son wishes me to give my account of the things which happened out of Semur during its miraculous occupation, as it is his desire, in the interests of truth, that nothing should be left out. In this I find a great difficulty for many reasons; in the first place, because I have not the aptitude of expressing myself in writing, and it may well be that the phrases I employ may fail in the correctness which good French requires; and again, because it is my misfortune not to agree in all points with my Martin, though I am proud to think that he is, in every relation of life, so good a man, that the women of his family need not hesitate to follow his advice – but necessarily there are some points which one reserves; and I cannot but feel the closeness of the connection between the late remarkable exhibition of the power of Heaven and the outrage done upon the good Sisters of St Jean by the administration, of which unfortunately my son is at the head. I say unfortunately, since it is the spirit of independence and pride in him which has resisted all the warnings offered by Divine Providence, and which refuses even now to right the wrongs of the Sisters of St Jean; though, if it may be permitted to me to say it, as his mother, it was very fortunate in the late troubles that Martin Dupin found himself at the head of the Commune of Semur – since who else could have kept his self-control as he did? – caring for all things and forgetting nothing; who else would, with so much courage, have entered the city? and what other man, being a person of the world and secular in all his thoughts, as, alas! it is so common for men to be, would have so nobly acknowledged his obligations to the good God when our misfortunes were over? My constant prayers for his conversion do not make me incapable of perceiving the nobility of his conduct. When the evidence has been incontestible he has not hesitated to make a public profession of his gratitude, which all will acknowledge to be the sign of a truly noble mind and a heart of gold.

I have long felt that the times were ripe for some exhibition of the power of God. Things have been going very badly among us. Not only have the powers of darkness triumphed over our holy church, in a manner ever to be wept and mourned by all the faithful, and which might have been expected to bring down fire from Heaven upon our heads, but the corruption of popular manners (as might also have been expected) has been daily arising to a pitch unprecedented. The fetes may indeed be said to be observed, but in what manner? In the cabarets rather than in the churches; and as for the fasts and the vigils, who thinks of them? who attends to those sacred moments of penitence? Scarcely even a few ladies are found to do so, instead of the whole population, as in duty bound. I have even seen it happen that my daughter-in-law and myself, and her friend Madame de Bois-Sombre, and old Mere Julie from the market, have formed the whole congregation. Figure to yourself the *bon Dieu* and all the blessed saints looking down from heaven to hear – four persons only in our great Cathedral! I trust that I know that the good God does not despise even two or three; but if any one will think of it – the great bells rung, and the candles lighted, and the curé in his beautiful robes, and all the companies of heaven looking on – and only us four! This shows the neglect of all sacred ordinances that was in Semur. While, on the other hand, what grasping there was for money; what fraud and deceit; what foolishness and dissipation! Even the Mere Julie herself, though a devout person, the pears she sold to us on the last market day before these events, were far, very far, as she must have known, from being satisfactory. In the same way Gros-Jean, though a peasant from our own village near La Clairière, and a man for whom we have often done little services, attempted to impose upon me about the wood for the winter's use, the very night before these occurrences. 'It is enough,' I cried out, 'to bring the dead out of their graves.' I did not know – the holy saints forgive me! – how near it was to the moment when this should come true.

And perhaps it is well that I should admit without concealment that I am not one of the women to whom it has been given to see those who came back. There are moments when I will not deny I have asked myself why those others should have been so privileged and never I. Not even in a dream do I see those whom I have lost; yet I think that I too have loved them as well as any have been loved. I have

stood by their beds to the last; I have closed their beloved eyes. *Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* have not I drunk of that cup to the dregs? But never to me, never to me, has it been permitted either to see or to hear. *Bien!* it has been so ordered. Agnès, my daughter-in-law, is a good woman. I have not a word to say against her; and if there are moments when my heart rebels, when I ask myself why she should have her eyes opened and not I, the good God knows that I do not complain against His will – it is in His hand to do as He pleases. And if I receive no privileges, yet have I the privilege which is best, which is, as M. le Maire justly observes, the highest of all – that of doing my duty. In this I thank the good Lord our Seigneur that my Martin has never needed to be ashamed of his mother.

I will also admit that when it was first made apparent to me – not by the sounds of voices which the others heard, but by the use of my reason which I humbly believe is also a gift of God – that the way in which I could best serve both those of the city and my son Martin, who is over them, was to lead the way with the children and all the helpless to La Clairière, thus relieving the watchers, there was for a time a great struggle in my bosom. What were they all to me, that I should desert my Martin, my only son, the child of my old age; he who is as his father, as dear, and yet more dear, because he is his father's son? 'What! (I said in my heart) abandon thee, my child? nay, rather abandon life and every consolation; for what is life to me but thee?' But while my heart swelled with this cry, suddenly it became apparent to me how many there were holding up their hands helplessly to him, clinging to him so that he could not move. To whom else could they turn? He was the one among all who preserved his courage, who neither feared nor failed. When those voices rang out from the walls – which some understood, but which I did not understand, and many more with me – though my heart was wrung with straining my ears to listen if there was not a voice for me too, yet at the same time this thought was working in my heart. There was a poor woman close to me with little children clinging to her; neither did she know what those voices said. Her eyes turned from Semur, all lost in the darkness, to the sky above us and to me beside her, all confused and bewildered; and the children clung to her, all in tears, crying with that wail which is endless – the trouble of childhood which does not know why it is troubled. 'Maman! Maman!' they cried 'let us go home.' 'Oh! be silent, my little ones,' said the poor woman; 'be silent; we will go to M. le Maire – he will not leave us without a friend.' It was then that I saw what my duty was. But it was with a pang – *bon Dieu!* – when I turned my back upon my Martin, when I went away to shelter, to peace, leaving my son thus in face of an offended Heaven and all the invisible powers, do you suppose it was a whole heart I carried in my breast? But no! it was nothing save a great ache – a struggle as of death. But what of that? I had my duty to do, as he had – and as he did not flinch, so did not I; otherwise he would have been ashamed of his mother – and I? I should have felt that the blood was not mine which ran in his veins.

No one can tell what it was, that march to La Clairière. Agnès first was like an angel. I hope I always do Madame Martin justice. She is a saint. She is good to the bottom of her heart. Nevertheless, with those natures which are enthusiast – which are upborne by excitement – there is also a weakness. Though she was brave as the holy Pucelle when we set out, after a while she flagged like another. The colour went out of her face, and though she smiled still, yet the tears came to her eyes, and she would have wept with the other women, and with the wail of the weary children, and all the agitation, and the weariness, and the length of the way, had not I recalled her to herself. 'Courage!' I said to her. 'Courage, *ma fille*! We will throw open all the chambers. I will give up even that one in which my Martin Dupin, the father of thy husband, died.' '*Ma mère*,' she said, holding my hand to her bosom, 'he is not dead – he is in Semur.' Forgive me, dear Lord! It gave me a pang that she could see him and not I. 'For me,' I cried, 'it is enough to know that my good man is in heaven: his room, which I have kept sacred, shall be given up to the poor.' But oh! the confusion of the stumbling, weary feet; the little children that dropped by the way, and caught at our skirts, and wailed and sobbed; the poor mothers with babes upon each arm, with sick hearts and failing limbs. One cry seemed to rise round us as we went, each infant moving the others to sympathy, till it rose like one breath, a wail of *'Maman! Maman!'* a cry that had no meaning, through having so much meaning. It was difficult not to cry out too in the excitement, in the labouring of the long, long, confused, and tedious way. *'Maman! Maman!'* The Holy Mother could not but hear it. It is not possible but that she must have looked out upon us, and heard us, so helpless as we were, where she sits in heaven.

When we got to La Clairière we were ready to sink down with fatigue like all the rest – nay, even more than the rest, for we were not used to it, and for my part I had altogether lost the habitude of long walks. But then you could see what Madame Martin was. She is slight and fragile and pale, not strong, as any one can perceive; but she rose above the needs of the body. She was the one among us who rested not. We threw open all the rooms, and the poor people thronged in. Old Léontine, who is the *garde* of the house, gazed upon us and the crowd whom we brought with us with great eyes full of fear and trouble. 'But, Madame,' she cried, 'Madame!' following me as I went above to the better rooms. She pulled me by

my robe. She pushed the poor women with their children away. '*Allez donc, allez!* – rest outside till these ladies have time to speak to you,' she said; and pulled me by my sleeve. Then 'Madame Martin is putting all this *canaille* into our very chambers,' she cried. She had always distrusted Madame Martin, who was taken by the peasants for a clerical and *devote*, because she was noble. 'The *bon Dieu* be praised that Madame also is here, who has sense and will regulate everything.' 'These are no *canaille*,' I said: 'be silent, *ma bonne* Léontine, here is something which you cannot understand. This is Semur which has come out to us for lodging.' She let the keys drop out of her hands. It was not wonderful if she was amazed. All day long she followed me about, her very mouth open with wonder. 'Madame Martin, that understands itself,' she would say. 'She is romanesque – she has imagination – but Madame, Madame has *bon sens* – who would have believed it of Madame?' Léontine had been my *femme de ménage* long before there was a Madame Martin, when my son was young; and naturally it was of me she still thought. But I cannot put down all the trouble we had ere we found shelter for every one. We filled the stables and the great barn, and all the cottages near; and to get them food, and to have something provided for those who were watching before the city, and who had no one but us to think of them, was a task which was almost beyond our powers. Truly it was beyond our powers – but the Holy Mother of heaven and the good angels helped us. I cannot tell to any one how it was accomplished, yet it was accomplished. The wail of the little ones ceased. They slept that first night as if they had been in heaven. As for us, when the night came, and the dews and the darkness, it seemed to us as if we were out of our bodies, so weary were we, so weary that we could not rest. From La Clairière on ordinary occasions it is a beautiful sight to see the lights of Semur shining in all the high windows, and the streets throwing up a faint whiteness upon the sky; but how strange it was now to look down and see nothing but a darkness – a cloud, which was the city! The lights of the watchers in their camp were invisible to us, – they were so small and low upon the broken ground that we could not see them. Our Agnès crept close to me; we went with one accord to the seat before the door. We did not say 'I will go,' but went by one impulse, for our hearts were there; and we were glad to taste the freshness of the night and be silent after all our labours. We leant upon each other in our weariness. '*Ma mère*,' she said, 'where is he now, our Martin?' and wept. 'He is where there is the most to do, be thou sure of that,' I cried, but wept not. For what did I bring him into the world but for this end?

Were I to go day by day and hour by hour over that time of trouble, the story would not please any one. Many were brave and forgot their own sorrows to occupy themselves with those of others, but many also were not brave. There were those among us who murmured and complained. Some would contend with us to let them go and call their husbands, and leave the miserable country where such things could happen. Some would rave against the priests and the government, and some against those who neglected and offended the Holy Church. Among them there were those who did not hesitate to say it was our fault, though how we were answerable they could not tell. We were never at any time of the day or night without a sound of some one weeping or bewailing herself, as if she were the only sufferer, or crying out against those who had brought her here, far from all her friends. By times it seemed to me that I could bear it no longer, that it was but justice to turn those murmurers (*pleureuses*) away, and let them try what better they could do for themselves. But in this point Madame Martin surpassed me. I do not grudge to say it. She was better than I was, for she was more patient. She wept with the weeping women, then dried her eyes and smiled upon them without a thought of anger – whereas I could have turned them to the door. One thing, however, which I could not away with, was that Agnès filled her own chamber with the poorest of the poor. 'How,' I cried, 'thyself and thy friend Madame de Bois-Sombre, were you not enough to fill it, that you should throw open that chamber to good-for-nothings, to *va-nu-pieds*, to the very rabble?' '*Ma mère*,' said Madame Martin, 'our good Lord died for them.' 'And surely for thee too, thou *saint-imbécile*!' I cried out in my indignation. What, my Martin's chamber which he had adorned for his bride! I was beside myself. And they have an obstinacy these enthusiasts! But for that matter her friend Madame de Bois-Sombre thought the same. She would have been one of the *pleureuses* herself had it not been for shame. 'Agnès wishes to aid the *bon Dieu*, Madame,' she said, 'to make us suffer still a little more.' The tone in which she spoke, and the contraction in her forehead, as if our hospitality was not enough for her, turned my heart again to my daughter-in-law. 'You have reason, Madame,' I cried; 'there are indeed many ways in which Agnès does the work of the good God.' The Bois-Sombres are poor, they have not a roof to shelter them save that of the old hotel in Semur, from whence they were sent forth like the rest of us. And she and her children owed all to Agnès. Figure to yourself then my resentment when this lady directed her scorn at my daughter-in-law. I am not myself noble, though of the *haute bourgeoisie*, which some people think a purer race.

Long and terrible were the days we spent in this suspense. For ourselves it was well that there was so much to do – the food to provide for all this multitude, the little children to care for, and to prepare the

provisions for our men who were before Semur. I was in the Ardennes during the war, and I saw some of its perils – but these were nothing to what we encountered now. It is true that my son Martin was not in the war, which made it very different to me; but here the dangers were such as we could not understand, and they weighed upon our spirits. The seat at the door, and that point where the road turned, where there was always so beautiful a view of the valley and of the town of Semur – were constantly occupied by groups of poor people gazing at the darkness in which their homes lay. It was strange to see them, some kneeling and praying with moving lips; some taking but one look, not able to endure the sight. I was of these last. From time to time, whenever I had a moment I came out, I know not why, to see if there was any change. But to gaze upon that altered prospect for hours, as some did, would have been intolerable to me. I could not linger nor try to imagine what might be passing there, either among those who were within (as was believed), or those who were without the walls. Neither could I pray as many did. My devotions of every day I will never, I trust, forsake or forget, and that my Martin was always in my mind is it needful to say? But to go over and over all the vague fears that were in me, and all those thoughts which would have broken my heart had they been put into words, I could not do this even to the good Lord Himself. When I suffered myself to think, my heart grew sick, my head swam round, the light went from my eyes. They are happy who can do so, who can take the *bon Dieu* into their confidence, and say all to Him; but me, I could not do it. I could not dwell upon that which was so terrible, upon my home abandoned, my son – Ah? now that it is past, it is still terrible to think of. And then it was all I was capable of, to trust my God and do what was set before me. God, He knows what it is we can do and what we cannot. I could not tell even to Him all the terror and the misery and the darkness there was in me; but I put my faith in Him. It was all of which I was capable. We are not made alike, neither in the body nor in the soul.

And there were many women like me at La Clairière. When we had done each piece of work we would look out with a kind of hope, then go back to find something else to do – not looking at each other, not saying a word. Happily there was a great deal to do. And to see how some of the women, and those the most anxious, would work, never resting, going on from one thing to another, as if they were hungry for more and more! Some did it with their mouths shut close, with their countenances fixed, not daring to pause or meet another's eyes; but some, who were more patient, worked with a soft word, and sometimes a smile, and sometimes a tear; but ever working on. Some of them were an example to us all. In the morning, when we got up, some from beds, some from the floor, – I insisted that all should lie down, by turns at least, for we could not make room for every one at the same hours, – the very first thought of all was to hasten to the window, or, better, to the door. Who could tell what might have happened while we slept? For the first moment no one would speak, – it was the moment of hope – and then there would be a cry, a clasping of the hands, which told – what we all knew. The one of the women who touched my heart most was the wife of Riou of the *octroi.* She had been almost rich for her condition in life, with a good house and a little servant whom she trained admirably, as I have had occasion to know. Her husband and her son were both among those whom we had left under the walls of Semur; but she had three children with her at La Clairière. Madame Riou slept lightly, and so did I. Sometimes I heard her stir in the middle of the night, though so softly that no one woke. We were in the same room, for it may be supposed that to keep a room to one's self was not possible. I did not stir, but lay and watched her as she went to the window, her figure visible against the pale dawning of the light, with an eager quick movement as of expectation – then turning back with slower step and a sigh. She was always full of hope. As the days went on, there came to be a kind of communication between us. We understood each other. When one was occupied and the other free, that one of us who went out to the door to look across the valley where Semur was would look at the other as if to say, 'I go.' When it was Madame Riou who did this, I shook my head, and she gave me a smile which awoke at every repetition (though I knew it was vain) a faint expectation, a little hope. When she came back, it was she who would shake her head, with her eyes full of tears. 'Did I not tell thee?' I said, speaking to her as if she were my daughter. 'It will be for next time, Madame,' she would say, and smile, yet put her apron to her eyes. There were many who were like her, and there were those of whom I have spoken who were *pleureuses*, never hoping anything, doing little, bewailing themselves and their hard fate. Some of them we employed to carry the provisions to Semur, and this amused them, though the heaviness of the baskets made again a complaint.

As for the children, thank God! they were not disturbed as we were – to them it was a beautiful holiday – it was like Heaven. There is no place on earth that I love like Semur, yet it is true that the streets are narrow, and there is not much room for the children. Here they were happy as the day; they strayed over all our gardens and the meadows, which were full of flowers; they sat in companies upon the green grass, as thick as the daisies themselves, which they loved. Old Sister Mariette, who is called Marie de la Consolation, sat out in the meadow under an acacia-tree and watched over them. She was the one among

us who was happy. She had no son, no husband, among the watchers, and though, no doubt, she loved her convent and her hospital, yet she sat all day long in the shade and in the full air, and smiled, and never looked towards Semur. 'The good Lord will do as He wills,' she said, 'and that will be well.' It was true – we all knew it was true; but it might be – who could tell? – that it was His will to destroy our town, and take away our bread, and perhaps the lives of those who were dear to us; and something came in our throats which prevented a reply. '*Ma sœur*,' I said, 'we are of the world, we tremble for those we love; we are not as you are.' Sister Mariette did nothing but smile upon us. 'I have known my Lord these sixty years,' she said, 'and He has taken everything from me.' To see her smile as she said this was more than I could bear. From me He had taken something, but not all. Must we be prepared to give up all if we would be perfected? There were many of the others also who trembled at these words. 'And now He gives me my consolation,' she said, and called the little ones round her, and told them a tale of the Good Shepherd, which is out of the holy Gospel. To see all the little ones round her knees in a crowd, and the peaceful face with which she smiled upon them, and the meadows all full of flowers, and the sunshine coming and going through the branches: and to hear that tale of Him who went forth to seek the lamb that was lost, was like a tale out of a holy book, where all was peace and goodness and joy. But on the other side, not twenty steps off, was the house full of those who wept, and at all the doors and windows anxious faces gazing down upon that cloud in the valley where Semur was. A procession of our women was coming back, many with lingering steps, carrying the baskets which were empty. 'Is there any news?' we asked, reading their faces before they could answer. And some shook their heads, and some wept. There was no other reply.

On the last night before our deliverance, suddenly, in the middle of the night, there was a great commotion in the house. We all rose out of our beds at the sound of the cry, almost believing that some one at the window had seen the lifting of the cloud, and rushed together, frightened, yet all in an eager expectation to hear what it was. It was in the room where the old Mere Julie slept that the disturbance was. Mere Julie was one of the market-women of Semur, the one I have mentioned who was devout, who never missed the *Salut* in the afternoon, besides all masses which are obligatory. But there were other matters in which she had not satisfied my mind, as I have before said. She was the mother of Jacques Richard, who was a good-for-nothing, as is well known. At La Clairière Mere Julie had enacted a strange part. She had taken no part in anything that was done, but had established herself in the chamber allotted to her, and taken the best bed in it, where she kept her place night and day, making the others wait upon her. She had always expressed a great devotion for St Jean; and the Sisters of the Hospital had been very kind to her, and also to her *vaurien* of a son, who was indeed, in some manner, the occasion of all our troubles – being the first who complained of the opening of the chapel into the chief ward, which was closed up by the administration, and thus became, as I and many others think, the cause of all the calamities that have come upon us. It was her bed that was the centre of the great commotion we had heard, and a dozen voices immediately began to explain to us as we entered. 'Mere Julie has had a dream. She has seen a vision,' they said. It was a vision of angels in the most beautiful robes, all shining with gold and whiteness.

'The dress of the Holy Mother which she wears on the great *fêtes* was nothing to them,' Mere Julie told us, when she had composed herself. For all had run here and there at her first cry, and procured for her a *tisane*, and a cup of *bouillon*, and all that was good for an attack of the nerves, which was what it was at first supposed to be. 'Their wings were like the wings of the great peacock on the terrace, but also like those of eagles. And each one had a collar of beautiful jewels about his neck, and robes whiter than those of any bride.' This was the description she gave: and to see the women how they listened, head above head, a cloud of eager faces, all full of awe and attention! The angels had promised her that they would come again, when we had bound ourselves to observe all the functions of the Church, and when all these Messieurs had been converted, and made their submission – to lead us back gloriously to Semur. There was a great tumult in the chamber, and all cried out that they were convinced, that they were ready to promise. All except Madame Martin, who stood and looked at them with a look which surprised me, which was of pity rather than sympathy. As there was no one else to speak, I took the word, being the mother of the present Maire, and wife of the last, and in part mistress of the house. Had Agnès spoken I would have yielded to her, but as she was silent I took my right. 'Mere Julie,' I said, 'and *mes bonnes femmes*, my friends, know you that it is the middle of the night, the hour at which we must rest if we are to be able to do the work that is needful, which the *bon Dieu* has laid upon us? It is not from us – my daughter and myself – who, it is well known, have followed all the functions of the Church, that you will meet with an opposition to your promise. But what I desire is that you should calm yourselves, that you should retire and rest till the time of work, husbanding your strength, since we know not what claim may be made upon it. The holy angels,' I said, 'will comprehend, or if not they, then the *bon Dieu*, who

understands everything.'

But it was with difficulty that I could induce them to listen to me, to do that which was reasonable. When, however, we had quieted the agitation, and persuaded the good women to repose themselves, it was no longer possible for me to rest. I promised to myself a little moment of quiet, for my heart longed to be alone. I stole out as quietly as I might, not to disturb any one, and sat down upon the bench outside the door. It was still a kind of half-dark, nothing visible, so that if any one should gaze and gaze down the valley, it was not possible to see what was there: and I was glad that it was not possible, for my very soul was tired. I sat down and leant my back upon the wall of our house, and opened my lips to draw in the air of the morning. How still it was! the very birds not yet begun to rustle and stir in the bushes; the night air hushed, and scarcely the first faint tint of blue beginning to steal into the darkness. When I had sat there a little, closing my eyes, lo, tears began to steal into them like rain when there has been a fever of heat. I have wept in my time many tears, but the time of weeping is over with me, and through all these miseries I had shed none. Now they came without asking, like a benediction refreshing my eyes. Just then I felt a soft pressure upon my shoulder, and there was Agnès coming close, putting her shoulder to mine, as was her way, that we might support each other.

'You weep, *ma mère*,' she said.

'I think it is one of the angels Mere Julie has seen,' said I. 'It is a refreshment – a blessing; my eyes were dry with weariness.'

'Mother,' said Madame Martin, 'do you think it is angels with wings like peacocks and jewelled collars that our Father sends to us? Ah, not so – one of those whom we love has touched your dear eyes,' and with that she kissed me upon my eyes, taking me in her arms. My heart is sometimes hard to my son's wife, but not always – not with my will, God knows! Her kiss was soft as the touch of any angel could be.

'God bless thee, my child,' I said.

'Thanks, thanks, *ma mère*!' she cried. 'Now I am resolved; now will I go and speak to Martin – of something in my heart.'

'What will you do, my child?' I said, for as the light increased I could see the meaning in her face, and that it was wrought up for some great thing. 'Beware, Agnès; risk not my son's happiness by risking thyself; thou art more to Martin than all the world beside.'

'He loves thee dearly, mother,' she said. My heart was comforted. I was able to remember that I too had had my day. 'He loves his mother, thank God, but not as he loves thee. Beware, *ma fille*. If you risk my son's happiness, neither will I forgive you.' She smiled upon me, and kissed my hands.

'I will go and take him his food and some linen, and carry him your love and mine.'

'*You* will go, and carry one of those heavy baskets with the others!'

'Mother,' cried Agnès, 'now you shame me that I have never done it before.'

What could I say? Those whose turn it was were preparing their burdens to set out. She had her little packet made up, besides, of our cool white linen, which I knew would be so grateful to my son. I went with her to the turn of the road, helping her with her basket; but my limbs trembled, what with the long continuance of the trial, what with the agitation of the night. It was but just daylight when they went away, disappearing down the long slope of the road that led to Semur. I went back to the bench at the door, and there I sat down and thought. Assuredly it was wrong to close up the chapel, to deprive the sick of the benefit of the holy mass. But yet I could not but reflect that the *bon Dieu* had suffered still more great scandals to take place without such a punishment. When, however, I reflected on all that has been done by those who have no cares of this world as we have, but are brides of Christ, and upon all they resign by their dedication, and the claim they have to be furthered, not hindered, in their holy work; and when I bethought myself how many and great are the powers of evil, and that, save in us poor women who can do so little, the Church has few friends: then it came back to me how heinous was the offence that had been committed, and that it might well be that the saints out of heaven should return to earth to take the part and avenge the cause of the weak. My husband would have been the first to do it, had he seen with my eyes; but though in the flesh he did not do so, is it to be doubted that in heaven their eyes are enlightened – those who have been subjected to the cleansing fires and have ascended into final bliss? This all became clear to me as I sat and pondered, while the morning light grew around me, and the sun rose and shed his first rays, which are as precious gold, on the summits of the mountains – for at La Clairière we are nearer the mountains than at Semur.

The house was more still than usual, and all slept to a later hour because of the agitation of the past night. I had been seated, like old sister Mariette, with my eyes turned rather towards the hills than to the valley, being so deep in my thoughts that I did not look, as it was our constant wont to look, if any change had happened over Semur. Thus blessings come unawares when we are not looking for them. Suddenly I lifted my eyes – but not with expectation – languidly, as one looks without thought. Then it

was that I gave that great cry which brought all crowding to the windows, to the gardens, to every spot from whence that blessed sight was visible; for there before us, piercing through the clouds, were the beautiful towers of Semur, the Cathedral with all its pinnacles, that are as if they were carved out of foam, and the solid tower of St Lambert, and the others, every one. They told me after that I flew, though I am past running, to the farmyard to call all the labourers and servants of the farm, bidding them prepare every carriage and waggon, and even the *charrettes*, to carry back the children, and those who could not walk to the city.

'The men will be wild with privation and trouble,' I said to myself; 'they will want the sight of their little children, the comfort of their wives.'

I did not wait to reason nor to ask myself if I did well; and my son has told me since that he scarcely was more thankful for our great deliverance than, just when the crowd of gaunt and weary men returned into Semur, and there was a moment when excitement and joy were at their highest, and danger possible, to hear the roll of the heavy farm waggons, and to see me arrive, with all the little ones and their mothers, like a new army, to take possession of their homes once more.

CHAPTER 10

M. le Maire Concludes his Record

The narratives which I have collected from the different eyewitnesses during the time of my own absence, will show how everything passed while I, with M. le Curé, was recovering possession of our city. Many have reported to me verbally the occurrences of the last half-hour before my return; and in their accounts there are naturally discrepancies, owing to their different points of view and different ways of regarding the subject. But all are agreed that a strange and universal slumber had seized upon all. M. de Bois-Sombre even admits that he, too, was overcome by this influence. They slept while we were performing our dangerous and solemn duty in Semur. But when the Cathedral bells began to ring, with one impulse all awoke, and starting from the places where they lay, from the shade of the trees and bushes and sheltering hollows, saw the cloud and the mist and the darkness which had enveloped Semur suddenly rise from the walls. It floated up into the higher air before their eyes, then was caught and carried away, and flung about into shreds upon the sky by a strong wind, of which down below no influence was felt. They all gazed, not able to get their breath, speechless, beside themselves with joy, and saw the walls reappear, and the roofs of the houses, and our glorious Cathedral against the blue sky. They stood for a moment spell-bound. M. de Bois-Sombre informs me that he was afraid of a wild rush into the city, and himself hastened to the front to lead and restrain it; when suddenly a great cry rang through the air, and some one was seen to fall across the high road, straight in front of the Porte St Lambert. M. de Bois-Sombre was at once aware who it was, for he himself had watched Lecamus taking his place at the feet of my wife, who awaited my return there. This checked the people in their first rush towards their homes; and when it was seen that Madame Dupin had also sunk down fainting on the ground after her more than human exertions for the comfort of all, there was but one impulse of tenderness and pity. When I reached the gate on my return, I found my wife lying there in all the pallor of death, and for a moment my heart stood still with sudden terror. What mattered Semur to me, if it had cost me my Agnès? or how could I think of Lecamus or any other, while she lay between life and death? I had her carried back to our own house. She was the first to re-enter Semur; and after a time, thanks be to God, she came back to herself. But Paul Lecamus was a dead man. No need to carry him in, to attempt unavailing cares. ‘He has gone, that one; he has marched with the others,’ said the old doctor, who had served in his day, and sometimes would use the language of the camp. He cast but one glance at him, and laid his hand upon his heart in passing. ‘Cover his face,’ was all he said.

It is possible that this check was good for the restraint of the crowd. It moderated the rush with which they returned to their homes. The sight of the motionless figures stretched out by the side of the way overawed them. Perhaps it may seem strange, to any one who has known what had occurred, that the state of the city should have given me great anxiety the first night of our return. The withdrawal of the oppression and awe which had been on the men, the return of everything to its natural state, the sight of their houses unchanged, so that the brain turned round of these common people, who seldom reflect upon anything, and they already began to ask themselves was it all a delusion – added to the exhaustion of their physical condition, and the natural desire for ease and pleasure after the long strain upon all their faculties – produced an excitement which might have led to very disastrous consequences. Fortunately I had foreseen this. I have always been considered to possess great knowledge of human nature, and this has been matured by recent events. I sent off messengers instantly to bring home the women and children, and called around me the men in whom I could most trust. Though I need not say that the excitement and suffering of the past three days had told not less upon myself than upon others, I abandoned all idea of rest. The first thing that I did, aided by my respectable fellow-townsmen, was to take possession of all *cabarets* and wine-shops, allowing indeed the proprietors to return, but preventing all assemblages within them. We then established a patrol of respectable citizens throughout the city, to preserve the public peace. I calculated, with great anxiety, how many hours it would be before my

messengers could reach La Clairière, to bring back the women – for in such a case the wives are the best guardians, and can exercise an influence more general and less suspected than that of the magistrates; but this was not to be hoped for for three or four hours at least. Judge, then, what was my joy and satisfaction when the sound of wheels (in itself a pleasant sound, for no wheels had been audible on the high-road since these events began) came briskly to us from the distance; and looking out from the watch tower over the Porte St Lambert, I saw the strangest procession. The wine-carts and all the farm vehicles of La Clairière, and every kind of country waggon, were jolting along the road, all in a tumult and babble of delicious voices; and from under the rude canopies and awnings and roofs of vine branches, made up to shield them from the sun, lo! there were the children like birds in a nest, one little head peeping over the other. And the cries and songs, the laughter, and the shoutings! As they came along the air grew sweet, the world was made new. Many of us, who had borne all the terrors and sufferings of the past without fainting, now felt their strength fail them. Some broke out into tears, interrupted with laughter. Some called out aloud the names of their little ones. We went out to meet them, every man there present, myself at the head. And I will not deny that a sensation of pride came over me when I saw my mother stand up in the first waggon, with all those happy ones fluttering around her. 'My son,' she said, 'I have discharged the trust that was given me. I bring thee back the blessing of God.' 'And God bless thee, my mother!' I cried. The other men, who were fathers, like me, came round me, crowding to kiss her hand. It is not among the women of my family that you will find those who abandon their duties.

And then to lift down in armfuls, those flowers of paradise, all fresh with the air of the fields, all joyous like the birds! We put them down by twos and threes, some of us sobbing with joy. And to see them dispersing hand in hand, running here and there, each to its home, carrying peace, and love, and gladness, through the streets – that was enough to make the most serious smile. No fear was in them, or care. Every haggard man they met – some of them feverish, restless, beginning to think of riot and pleasure after forced abstinence – there was a new shout, a rush of little feet, a shower of soft kisses. The women were following after, some packed into the carts and waggons, pale and worn, yet happy; some walking behind in groups; the more strong, or the more eager, in advance, and a long line of stragglers behind. There was anxiety in their faces, mingled with their joy. How did they know what they might find in the houses from which they had been shut out? And many felt, like me, that in the very return, in the relief, there was danger. But the children feared nothing; they filled the streets with their dear voices, and happiness came back with them. When I felt my little Jean's cheek against mine, then for the first time did I know how much anguish I had suffered – how terrible was parting, and how sweet was life. But strength and prudence melt away when one indulges one's self, even in one's dearest affections. I had to call my guardians together, to put mastery upon myself, that a just vigilance might not be relaxed. M. de Bois-Sombre, though less anxious than myself, and disposed to believe (being a soldier) that a little licence would do no harm, yet stood by me; and, thanks to our precautions, all went well.

Before night three parts of the population had returned to Semur, and the houses were all lighted up as for a great festival. The Cathedral stood open – even the great west doors, which are only opened on great occasions – with a glow of tapers gleaming out on every side. As I stood in the twilight watching, and glad at heart to think that all was going well, my mother and my wife – still pale, but now recovered from her fainting and weakness – came out into the great square, leading my little Jean. They were on their way to the Cathedral, to thank God for their return. They looked at me, but did not ask me to go with them, those dear women; they respect my opinions, as I had always respected theirs. But this silence moved me more than words; there came into my heart a sudden inspiration. I was still in my scarf of office, which had been, I say it without vanity, the standard of authority and protection during all our trouble; and thus marked out as representative of all, I uncovered myself, after the ladies of my family had passed, and, without joining them, silently followed with a slow and solemn step. A suggestion, a look, is enough for my countrymen; those who were in the Place with me perceived in a moment what I meant. One by one they uncovered, they put themselves behind me. Thus we made such a procession as had never been seen in Semur. We were gaunt and worn with watching and anxiety, which only added to the solemn effect. Those who were already in the Cathedral, and especially M. le Curé, informed me afterwards that the tramp of our male feet as we came up the great steps gave to all a thrill of expectation and awe. It was at the moment of the exposition of the Sacrament that we entered. Instinctively, in a moment, all understood – a thing which could happen nowhere but in France, where intelligence is swift as the breath on our lips. Those who were already there yielded their places to us, most of the women rising up, making as it were a ring round us, the tears running down their faces. When the Sacrament was replaced upon the altar, M. le Curé, perceiving our meaning, began at once in his noble voice to intone the *Te Deum*. Rejecting all other music, he adopted the plain song in which all could join, and with one voice, every man in unison with his brother, we sang with him. The great Cathedral walls seemed to

throb with the sound that rolled upward, *mâle* and deep, as no song has ever risen from Semur in the memory of man. The women stood up around us, and wept and sobbed with pride and joy.

When this wonderful moment was over, and all the people poured forth out of the Cathedral walls into the soft evening, with stars shining above, and all the friendly lights below, there was such a tumult of emotion and gladness as I have never seen before. Many of the poor women surrounded me, kissed my hand notwithstanding my resistance, and called upon God to bless me; while some of the older persons made remarks full of justice and feeling.

'The *bon Dieu* is not used to such singing,' one of them cried, her old eyes streaming with tears. 'It must have surprised the saints up in heaven!'

'It will bring a blessing,' cried another. 'It is not like our little voices, that perhaps only reach half-way.'

This was figurative language, yet it was impossible to doubt there was much truth in it. Such a submission of our intellects, as I felt in determining to make it, must have been pleasing to heaven. The women, they are always praying; but when we thus presented ourselves to give thanks, it meant something, a real homage; and with a feeling of solemnity we separated, aware that we had contented both earth and heaven.

Next morning there was a great function in the Cathedral, at which the whole city assisted. Those who could not get admittance crowded upon the steps, and knelt halfway across the Place. It was an occasion long remembered in Semur, though I have heard many say not in itself so impressive as the *Te Deum* on the evening of our return. After this we returned to our occupations, and life was resumed under its former conditions in our city.

It might be supposed, however, that the place in which events so extraordinary had happened would never again be as it was before. Had I not been myself so closely involved, it would have appeared to me certain, that the streets, trod once by such inhabitants as those who for three nights and days abode within Semur, would have always retained some trace of their presence; that life there would have been more solemn than in other places; and that those families for whose advantage the dead had risen out of their graves, would have henceforward carried about with them some sign of that interposition. It will seem almost incredible when I now add that nothing of this kind has happened at Semur. The wonderful manifestation which interrupted our existence has passed absolutely as if it had never been. We had not been twelve hours in our houses ere we had forgotten, or practically forgotten, our expulsion from them. Even myself, to whom everything was so vividly brought home, I have to enter my wife's room to put aside the curtain from little Marie's picture, and to see and touch the olive branch which is there, before I can recall to myself anything that resembles the feeling with which I re-entered that sanctuary. My grandfather's bureau still stands in the middle of my library, where I found it on my return; but I have got used to it, and it no longer affects me. Everything is as it was; and I cannot persuade myself that, for a time, I and mine were shut out, and our places taken by those who neither eat nor drink, and whose life is invisible to our eyes. Everything, I say, is as it was – everything goes on as if it would endure for ever. We know this cannot be, yet it does not move us. Why, then, should the other move us? A little time, we are aware, and we, too, shall be as they are – as shadows, and unseen. But neither has the one changed us, and neither does the other. There was, for some time, a greater respect shown to religion in Semur, and a more devout attendance at the sacred functions; but I regret to say this did not continue. Even in my own case – I say it with sorrow – it did not continue. M. le Curé is an admirable person. I know no more excellent ecclesiastic. He is indefatigable in the performance of his spiritual duties; and he has, besides, a noble and upright soul. Since the days when we suffered and laboured together, he has been to me as a brother. Still, it is undeniable that he makes calls upon our credulity, which a man obeys with reluctance. There are ways of surmounting this; as I see in Agnès for one, and in M. de Bois-Sombre for another. My wife does not question, she believes much; and in respect to that which she cannot acquiesce in, she is silent. 'There are many things I hear you talk of, Martin, which are strange to me,' she says, 'of myself I cannot believe in them; but I do not oppose, since it is possible you may have reason to know better than I; and so with some things that we hear from M. le Curé.' This is how she explains herself – but she is a woman. It is a matter of grace to yield to our better judgment. M. de Bois-Sombre has another way. '*Ma foi*,' he says, 'I have not the time for all your delicacies, my good people; I have come to see that these things are for the advantage of the world, and it is not my business to explain them. If M. le Curé attempted to criticise me in military matters, or thee, my excellent Martin, in affairs of business, or in the culture of your vines, I should think him not a wise man; and in like manner, faith and religion, these are his concern.' Felix de Bois-Sombre is an excellent fellow; but he smells a little of the *mousquetaire*. I, who am neither a soldier nor a woman, I have hesitations. Nevertheless, so long as I am Maire of Semur, nothing less than the most absolute respect shall ever be shown to all truly religious persons, with whom it is my earnest desire to remain in sympathy and fraternity, so far as that may be.

It seemed, however, a little while ago as if my tenure of this office would not be long, notwithstanding the services which I am acknowledged, on every hand, to have done to my fellow-townsmen. It will be remembered that when M. le Curé and myself found Semur empty, we heard a voice of complaining from the hospital of St Jean, and found a sick man who had been left there, and who grumbled against the Sisters, and accused them of neglecting him, but remained altogether unaware, in the meantime, of what had happened in the city. Will it be believed that after a time this fellow was put faith in as a seer, who had heard and beheld many things of which we were all ignorant? It must be said that, in the meantime, there had been a little excitement in the town on the subject of the Chapel in the hospital, to which repeated reference has already been made. It was insisted on behalf of these ladies that a promise had been given, taking, indeed, the form of a vow, that, as soon as we were again in possession of Semur, their full privileges should be restored to them. Their advocates even went so far as to send to me a deputation of those who had been nursed in the hospital, the leader of which was Jacques Richard, who since he has been, as he says, 'converted,' thrusts himself to the front of every movement.

'Permit me to speak, M. le Maire,' he said; 'me, who was one of those so misguided as to complain, before the great lesson we have all received. The mass did not disturb any sick person who was of right dispositions. I was then a very bad subject, indeed – as, alas! M. le Maire too well knows. It annoyed me only as all pious observances annoyed me. I am now, thank heaven, of a very different way of thinking—'

But I would not listen to the fellow. When he was a *mauvais sujet* he was less abhorrent to me than now.

The men were aware that when I pronounced myself so distinctly on any subject there was nothing more to be said, for, though gentle as a lamb and open to all reasonable arguments, I am capable of making the most obstinate stand for principle; and to yield to popular superstition, is that worthy of a man who has been instructed? At the same time it raised a great anger in my mind that all that should be thought of was a thing so trivial. That they should have given themselves, soul and body, for a little money; that they should have scoffed at all that was noble and generous, both in religion and in earthly things; all that was nothing to them. And now they would insult the Great God Himself by believing that all He cared for was a little mass in a convent chapel. What desecration! What debasement! When I went to M. le Curé, he smiled at my vehemence. There was pain in his smile, and it might be indignation; but he was not furious like me.

'They will conquer you, my friend,' he said.

'Never,' I cried. 'Before I might have yielded. But to tell me the gates of death have been rolled back, and Heaven revealed, and the great God stooped down from Heaven, in order that mass should be said according to the wishes of the community in the midst of the sick wards! They will never make me believe this, if I were to die for it.'

'Nevertheless, they will conquer,' M. le Curé said.

It angered me that he should say so. My heart was sore as if my friend had forsaken me. And then it was that the worst step was taken in this crusade of false religion. It was from my mother that I heard of it first. One day she came home in great excitement, saying that now indeed a real light was to be shed upon all that had happened to us.

'It appears,' she said, 'that Pierre Plastron was in the hospital all the time, and heard and saw many wonderful things. Sister Géneviève had just told me. It is wonderful beyond anything you could believe. He has spoken with our holy patron himself, St Lambert, and has received instructions for a pilgrimage—'

'Pierre Plastron!' I cried; 'Pierre Plastron saw nothing, *ma mère.* He was not even aware that anything remarkable had occurred. He complained to us of the Sisters that they neglected him: he knew nothing more.'

'My son,' she said, looking upon me with reproving eyes, 'what have the good Sisters done to thee? Why is it that you look so unfavourably upon everything that comes from the community of St Jean?'

'What have I to do with the community?' I cried – 'when I tell thee, Maman, that this Pierre Plastron knows nothing! I heard it from the fellow's own lips, and M. le Curé was present and heard him too. He had seen nothing, he knew nothing. Inquire of M. le Curé, if you have doubts of me.'

'I do not doubt you, Martin,' said my mother with severity, 'when you are not biased by prejudice. And, as for M. le Curé, it is well known that the clergy are often jealous of the good Sisters, when they are not under their own control.'

Such was the injustice with which we were treated. And next day nothing was talked of but the revelation of Pierre Plastron. What he had seen and what he had heard was wonderful. All the saints had come and talked with him, and told him what he was to say to his townsmen. They told him exactly how everything had happened: how St Jean himself had interfered on behalf of the Sisters, and how, if we were not more attentive on the duties of religion, certain among us would be bound hand and foot and

cast into the jaws of hell. That I was one, nay the chief, of these denounced persons, no one could have any doubt. This exasperated me; and as soon as I knew that this folly had been printed and was in every house, I hastened to M. le Curé, and entreated him in his next Sunday's sermon to tell the true story of Pierre Plastron, and reveal the imposture. But M. le Curé shook his head. 'It will do no good,' he said.

'But how no good?' said I. 'What good are we looking for? These are lies, nothing but lies. Either he has deceived the poor ladies basely, or they themselves – but this is what I cannot believe.'

'Dear friend,' he said, 'compose thyself. Have you never discovered yet how strong is self-delusion? There will be no lying of which they are aware. Figure to yourself what a stimulus to the imagination to know that he was here, actually here. Even I – it suggests a hundred things to me. The Sisters will have said to him (meaning no evil, nay meaning the edification of the people), "But, Pierre, reflect! You must have seen this and that. Recall thy recollections a little." And by degrees Pierre will have found out that he remembered – more than could have been hoped.'

'*Mon Dieu!*' I cried, out of patience, 'and you know all this, yet you will not tell them the truth – the very truth.'

'To what good?' he said. Perhaps M. le Curé was right: but, for my part, had I stood up in that pulpit, I should have contradicted their lies and given no quarter. This, indeed, was what I did both in my private and public capacity; but the people, though they loved me, did not believe me. They said, 'The best men have their prejudices. M. le Maire is an excellent man; but what will you? He is but human after all.'

M. le Curé and I said no more to each other on this subject. He was a brave man, yet here perhaps he was not quite brave. And the effect of Pierre Plastron's revelations in other quarters was to turn the awe that had been in many minds into mockery and laughter. '*Ma foi*,' said Felix de Bois-Sombre, 'Monseigneur St Lambert had bad taste, *mon ami* Martin, to choose Pierre Plastron for his confidant when he might have had thee.' 'M. de Bois-Sombre does ill to laugh,' said my mother (even my mother! she was not on my side), 'when it is known that the foolish are often chosen to confound the wise.' But Agnès, my wife, it was she who gave me the best consolation. She turned to me with the tears in her beautiful eyes.

'*Mon ami*,' she said, 'let Monseigneur St Lambert say what he will. He is not God that we should put him above all. There were other saints with other thoughts that came for thee and for me!'

All this contradiction was over when Agnès and I together took our flowers on the *jour des morts* to the graves we love. Glimmering among the rest was a new cross which I had not seen before. This was the inscription upon it:—

A PAUL LECAMUS
PARTI
LE 20 JUILLET, 1875
AVEC LES BIEN-AIMES

On it was wrought in the marble a little branch of olive. I turned to look at my wife as she laid underneath this cross a handful of violets. She gave me her hand still fragrant with the flowers. There was none of his family left to put up for him any token of human remembrance. Who but she should have done it, who had helped him to join that company and army of the beloved? 'This was our brother,' she said; 'he will tell my Marie what use I made of her olive leaves.'

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